

No. 29

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ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY



JACK LIGHTFOOT'S ALL-SPORTS TEAM

OR HOW LAFE LAMPTON THREW THE HAMMER

BY MAURICE STEVENS



After pushing the excited girl back, Jack had but a few seconds in which to seize upon the dog and drag him out of the course taken by the heavy, flying hammer.

Publishers' Note. "Teach the American boy how to become an athlete, and lay the foundation for a Constitution greater than that of the United States."—Wise sayings from "Tip Top." There has never been a time when the boys of this great country took so keen an interest in all manly and health-giving sports as they do to-day. As proof of this witness the record-breaking throngs that attend college struggles on the gridiron, as well as athletic and baseball games, and other tests of endurance and skill. In a multitude of other channels this love for the "life strenuous" is making itself manifest, so that, as a nation, we are rapidly forging to the front as seekers of honest sport. Recognizing this "handwriting on the wall," we have concluded that the time has arrived to give this vast army of young enthusiasts a publication devoted exclusively to invigorating out-door life. We feel we are justified in anticipating a warm response from our sturdy American boys, who are sure to revel in the stirring phases of sport and adventure, through which our characters pass from week to week.

ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY

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No. 29.

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Price Five Cents.

Jack Lightfoot's All-Sports Team;

OR,

HOW LAFE LAMPTON THREW THE HAMMER.

By MAURICE STEVENS.

CHARACTERS IN THIS STORY.

Jack Lightfoot, the best all-round athlete in Cranford or vicinity, a lad clear of eye, clean of speech, and, after he had conquered a few of his faults, possessed of a faculty for *doing things* while others were talking, that by degrees caused him to be looked upon as the natural leader in all the sports Young America delights in—a boy who in learning to conquer himself put the power into his hands to wrest victory from others.

Tom Lightfoot, Jack's cousin, and sometimes his rival; though their striving for the mastery was always of the friendly, generous kind. Tom was called the "Book-Worm" by his fellows, on account of his love for studying such secrets of nature as practical observers have discovered and published; so that he possessed a fund of general knowledge calculated to prove useful when his wandering spirit took him abroad into strange lands.

Lafe Lampton, a big, hulking chap, with an ever present craving for something to eat. Lafe always had his appetite along, and proved a staunch friend of our hero through thick and thin.

Wilson Crane, Ned Skeen, Brodie Strawn, Orson Oxx, some of the Cranford athletes who went to make up Jack's team.

Reel Snodgrass, who hated Jack, and planned his injury.

Delancy Shelton, a rich young dude who spent money like water.

Nick Flint, a scapegrace of the town, with all the worst traits of an Indian in his makeup.

Susie Powers, Nellie Conner, Kate Strawn, Lily Livingston, Daisy Lightfoot, girls who cheered the Cranford colors at the great tournament.

CHAPTER I.

TANGLING REEL SNODGRASS.

"Answer my question!"

Jack Lightfoot, acting as his own lawyer, was cross-questioning Reel Snodgrass.

Half the town of Cranford seemed to be packed within the little courtroom, or about it.

Justice Prendergast, a thick, paunchy man, with iron-gray hair, and his spectacles shoved well up on his forehead, sat in his big chair behind his high desk, looking out over the courtroom, and at the witness and the questioner.

Now and then he interjected a question himself, or made some statement of law, or admonished the crowd in the courtroom to keep quiet.

It was hard to keep that crowd quiet.

Jack's partisans were packed close behind him, filling all that part of the room, and they were inclined at times to be noisy.

The people who occupied the rest of the room were

equally inclined to be noisy, desiring to show their feelings with hand clappings and stampings of feet at times; until the justice of the peace before whom Jack had been arraigned had more than once threatened to clear the room if they did not keep still.

The whole thing had come about in this way:

Two or three days before, a Japanese teacher of jiu-jitsu had appeared in Cranford, coming from Cardiff at the invitation of Nat Kimball, who was a believer in jiu-jitsu and desired to have him get a class of Cranford young fellows.

Jack had met the Jap on the mat in the gym and had defeated him by using American methods of wrestling.

That same night Jack had been attacked on his way home, a diamond pin belonging to his sister was missed from her room, and the gym was fired by an incendiary.

It was believed at first, by Jack and others, that these things were done by the Jap, in a spirit of revenge against Jack for his defeat. There were a number of strange occurrences, all pointing to the Jap.

While Jack was trying to arrive at the truth and learn whether or not the Jap was really guilty, he made the startling discovery that the author of these crimes was a man called Boralmo, who had originally appeared in Cranford with Reel Snodgrass, posing as a Hindoo magician from Bombay.

In trying to seize Boralmo—who had invaded Jack's room and was there attacking the Jap—Jack pulled away the pocket of Boralmo's coat, finding in it later the missing pin, but Boralmo escaped; and no one had seen him but Jack and the Jap.*

When news spread over town that the man who had fired the gym and committed the other outrages was Boralmo, a feeling against Reel Snodgrass arose in the minds of many people.

Boralmo had already done strange things in Cranford and shown his criminal bent; and suspicion that Reel knew more than he would confess, that he was, in fact, Boralmo's confederate, grew out of this talk.

The whole thing so infuriated Reel that he secured a warrant for Jack's arrest, charging him with being the one who had set fire to the gym, and that all this talk about Boralmo was but dust to cover up his crime.

This warrant had been served on Jack by one of the deputies of Tom Kennedy, the constable, while Kennedy was away; and the deputy, coming to Jack's

home to serve the writ, had been unnecessarily harsh, gripping Jack by the arm and marching him in humiliation through the streets to the jail, where he would have been incarcerated but for the fact that Tom Lightfoot hurried to his aid and Tom's father offered bail for him.

Jack, aroused to a high pitch of indignation, had demanded an immediate trial.

The Jap was gone from Cardiff, and Jack could not summon him as a witness, a thing on which Reel had counted. Only the Jap and Jack had seen Boralmo, the supposed Hindoo.

Jack's mother being at the time in straitened financial circumstances, Jack declared that he would not permit her to hire a lawyer—though Tom Lightfoot's father and Jack's friends would have procured for him the best lawyer to be had in Cardiff, if he had consented—and, the trial being now on, Jack was defending himself with remarkable ability.

The whole town was seething with excitement. The courtroom was not only packed, but heads filled every window, and people who could not get in or get near the windows were being told by their friends at the windows just what was happening from time to time inside.

It is small wonder that the justice of the peace was having a hard time to control this excited crowd.

Reel Snodgrass was on the witness stand, and Jack was cross-examining him.

Reel had already testified that he had seen Jack near the gym just at the time of the fire and had seen him running away from it.

Jack had shot a question at him, and Reel had hesitated to answer.

"Answer my question!" was Jack's sharp demand.

Not far from Reel sat Delancy Shelton, his face pale and his weak blue eyes looking frightened.

It seemed to Delancy, even though he had advised Jack's arrest, that Reel had got himself into a "hole" by some answers Jack had already dragged out of him.

"What was the question?" said Reel, trembling.

His tanned face was as white as plaster where the tan did not cover up the real complexion. His eyes had become furtive and shifting.

The boys behind Jack, among them Lafe Lampton, Ned Skeen and others, tittered when Reel asked to have the question repeated.

"Jack's getting him all balled up!" Skeen whispered.

The justice rapped for order.

"Repeat your question, Mr. Lightfoot!" he said.

*See No. 28, last week's issue: "Jack Lightfoot on the Mat; or, The Jiu-jitsu Trick That Did Not Work."

"Wasn't I running *toward* the building, instead of *away* from it, when you saw me?"

"I—I don't think you were," Reel stammered.

"Don't you know that I was? I'm not asking you what you think."

Reel hesitated again.

"No, I don't know it."

"Will you swear, on your solemn oath, that I was running *away* from the building?"

"I have already said that I saw you there!" he declared, doggedly.

"Answer my question! Will you swear that I was running *away* from the building? Remember that you are on your oath!"

"Answer the question!" commanded the justice, sharply, when Reel still hesitated.

"N-no! I don't know which way you were running."

The boys behind Jack tittered again. Once more the justice pounded his desk to enforce order, while Delancy's pale blue eyes increased their look of fright.

"Then," said Jack, "why did you testify a while ago that you did see me running away?"

"I—I thought you were running away."

"You didn't see me set the fire?"

"I saw you by that stairway where the fire started."

"At the time the fire started?"

"Y-yes."

Again the boys laughed.

Jack dropped that subject and took up another.

"Will you swear that you did not see Boralmo in town here the night of the fire?"

"I did not see him."

"You did not know that he was in the town?"

Reel hesitated again.

"No."

"You did not tell anyone that he was in town that night and you had seen him?"

"No," said Reel.

He had told no one that but Delancy, and he wondered if Delancy had repeated it.

"Tell me why you think I set the gym on fire?"

"I don't know why you did it."

"Didn't you say I did it for the purpose of making that charge against Boralmo and so injuring you; that Boralmo was not here, and I knew he was not here?"

"Yes, I believe I said that."

"Yet you said just now you don't know why I did it!"

"That was my guess; I don't know certain."

"Isn't it a fact that you have said a good many things to injure me?"

"No more than you have said to injure me."

"That isn't answering my question."

"Answer the question," admonished the justice.

"Y-yes, I think I have."

"You have said a good many things for the purpose of injuring me."

Reel hesitated.

"Y-yes."

"Why?"

"Well"—he hesitated again—"I don't think you've treated me right."

"Now, I want you to remember that you're on your oath, and I'll ask you this: Didn't you have this warrant for my arrest issued simply to injure me?"

Reel's hands shook.

"No."

"You did not?"

"I did not."

Jack continued to ask him these keen questions until, before he was through, Reel had contradicted himself on a good many points.

Then, to Reel's surprise, Jack asked that Delancy Shelton should be placed on the witness stand.

Delancy had not been summoned as a witness, and his amazement, as well as Reel's, was great.

Delancy's face was already pale, but it became like chalk when the justice commanded him to come forward to the witness stand.

After Delancy had been duly sworn the first question fired at him by Jack was this:

"Mr. Shelton, will you say on your solemn oath that Mr. Reel Snodgrass did not tell you that on the night of the fire Boralmo was in town and he had seen him?"

Jack did not know that this was true.

He knew himself that Boralmo was in town; his common sense told him that Reel had met Boralmo, and his common sense also told him that Reel acquainted Delancy with about everything that happened to him.

Delancy hesitated, as Reel had done, and Jack saw that now he had him, and that his guess was right.

"Answer the question," commanded the justice.

Jack repeated it.

"Yes," said Delancy, his voice shaking; "he told me that he—aw—he had been, or perhaps it was—he knew, or maybe it was—that—that he had heard that Boralmo was here."

"He told you that Boralmo was in town that night?" Jack shot at him. "Answer me straight!"

"Y-ye-yes!"

"He has told you more than once that he dislikes me very much?"

"Ye-yes."

"Did he tell you that he meant to bring this charge against me, or had brought it against me, simply as spite work?"

Delancy appeared about to fall out of the chair; he rapped his cane about his legs and across his knees and seemed to become stifled.

Reel had told him that. Nevertheless, he saw how he had already damaged Reel; and now he lied outright to shield his friend.

"No," he answered, trembling.

"On your oath, do you say that?"

"He—he didn't tell me."

"Now, did he or did he not say he had seen and talked with Boralmo?"

Delancy saw that he would have to deny what he had already said.

"I—I think he said—think he said he was—aw—expecting him, don't y' know; yes, that is what he said—that he was, or had been, expecting him."

Delancy, by this hedging, made everybody sure that he was swearing falsely; but at the same time he thus shielded Reel from a possible prosecution on the charge of perjury.

Before Jack got through with Delancy and Reel, everything Reel had said as evidence had been so ridiculed that it was worth nothing.

Then Jack called witnesses who testified that he was up in town when the fire started, that he had rung in a fire alarm and had been the first to run toward the gym to put out the fire.

Jack also took the stand in his own behalf, and told where he was, what he had done and what he had seen that night; and told it all in so straightforward a manner that everyone saw he was speaking the truth.

The trial was what is called a preliminary examination before a justice of the peace. If the testimony had been in any manner against Jack he would have been held by the justice to a higher court for a regular trial.

As it was, Jack was hardly out of the witness chair before the justice had dismissed the case against him, inserting, as he did so, a sharp lecture to Reel Snodgrass, warning him never again at his peril to bring a case before that court unless he had good and abundant evidence to back it, and plainly hinting a belief that the whole thing was spite work, and that both Reel and Delancy had committed perjury.

Delancy had been so frightened by Jack's sharp examination that already he had left the courtroom, and Reel hurried out as soon as he could get through the crowd that jammed the door.

Even the justice did not stop—perhaps he did not want to stop—the tremendous yell of triumph that broke from the midst of Jack's friends in the courtroom.

Dozens and scores of people were now crowding around Jack, reaching out to take him by the hand and congratulate him.

Even the justice descended from his chair for that purpose.

"Jack," he said, smiling, "I think you were cut out for a lawyer. A regular attorney couldn't have done better, and a good many of them couldn't have done as well. Let me congratulate you and assure you of my belief in your complete innocence."

There were some girls in that packed courtroom, sandwiched in with some women, among the women being Jack's mother.

The girls came forward with Jack's mother and his sister, Daisy.

The reader needs hardly to be told that with those girls were Kate Strawn and Nellie Conner.

Another was there who had long been, and still was, the friend of both Reel and Delancy; this was Lily Livingston.

She was one of the first to greet Jack, and her face was beaming as she took him by the hand.

Ned Skeen was standing with Lafe Lampton, and he heard Lily Livingston's words.

"Look at that—look at that!" he whispered. "Don't that prove what I've always said—that you can't trust girls? Hear her! She making Jack think she's the best and jolliest friend he's got; and yet, as soon as she gets out of here, she'll be saying things just as nice to Reel and Delancy. Howling mackerels, it's things like that which make me hate girls."

"Oh, the girls are all right," Lafe grunted, hunting vainly through his pockets for a peanut. "Anyway, I don't care anything about that; the only thing I'm thinking of is how neatly Jack showed up those scoundrels. I want to yell, and I will yell, to my heart's content, as soon as I can get out of here."

A little later he was outside with a great mob of Jack's friends and admirers.

"What about Jack Lightfoot?" he shouted, swinging his cap.

Then all bellowed, at the top of their lungs:

"He's all right!"

CHAPTER II.

REEL'S DESERVED PUNISHMENT.

When Jack Lightfoot met Reel Snodgrass, quite by chance, late that afternoon, the anger that had bubbled in him all day was sent beyond bounds by the sneering words and manner with which Reel greeted him.

The place was down by the fair-ground fence, in a narrow path that led round that way from the lake.

They were alone in the path.

"You got off slick enough," sneered Reel, "and perhaps you got your friends to believe that you were innocent, but I've heard a good many people say since that they still think you were guilty."

"You mean you have said that to a good many people."

"I've heard people say it."

Jack stepped up to him.

"Reel, you're a low-down cur and a liar!"

"Don't strike me!" Reel warned.

"You haven't heard anyone say that he thought I was guilty."

"You're another liar; I have. I've heard dozens say it!"

More than once it has been shown that Jack Lightfoot had a fiery temper, which he tried to control, but which often got away from him. It got away from him now.

He struck Reel in the face, knocking him up against the fence.

"You lying cur!" he shouted, advancing on him.

"Don't hit me again!" said Reel. "If you do——"

"If I do, what?"

"Well, don't hit me again!"

"Take back those lies you have told about me!"

"They weren't lies!"

"Take them back!"

"They weren't lies—you did set the gym on fire, and——"

Crack!

Jack's wrath exploded again, and Reel fell to the ground, knocked down.

He sprang up, shrieking with rage, and rushed at Jack.

"Reel, you scoundrel, I've stood as much from you as I'm going to! You've injured me in every way possible, and now I'll settle with you!"

Then he knocked Reel down again as the latter came at him, and when Reel tried to get up he knocked him down once more.

Jack's rage was now like a volcano; he forgot cau-

tion, forgot everything he should have thought of. He seemed about to rush on Reel again.

Reel drew a pistol, as he lay on the ground, and leveled it at Jack.

His finger was on the trigger and the hammer of the weapon was rising, and his pale face, distorted with anger, showed that he really meant to shoot, when, with a quick jump, Jack kicked the pistol out of his hand.

"You're a coward and a bully!" Reel screamed, while his fingers tingled with pain.

"And you're a cur and a scoundrel! Get up and face me like a man! You don't dare to do it. Get up, and I'll pound your face off."

Reel was crawling away, as if he feared Jack's foot.

"I don't take back anything," he shouted, vindictively. "You're a——"

Jack, wild with rage, was about to leap at him again. He was interrupted.

There was a swish of starched skirts and Lily Livingston ran in to interpose between them.

She had been down by the lake, and, seeing Reel on that path, she had taken it, thinking to overtake him and walk on into the town with him.

She beheld Jack leaping at Reel, his fist clinched and his face aflame with anger.

"Why, Mr. Lightfoot!" she cried, stepping between him and Reel. "Why, I'm astonished!"

"He deserves it," said Jack. "He didn't get half that was coming to him."

Nevertheless he stopped.

Lily's appearance had suddenly brought him back to his senses. His face, which had been red with rage, lost its color and became a sickly white.

Reel scrambled to his feet, cursing.

"Why—why, I don't understand the meaning of this!" said Lily, still interposing between them.

She was a good-looking summer girl, of jolly manners, clad in white, with tan belt, tan shoes and a light straw hat on her head.

"I knocked him down," said Jack, bluntly, at the same time breathing very hard.

"And were intending to do it again?"

"Yes, I was; and if I knocked him down every five minutes for a whole day I couldn't knock him down as many times as he deserves. He's treated me villainously and lied about me until I can't stand it any longer."

Lily Livingston stared at him.

"Mr. Lightfoot, I'm astonished! I thought you were a gentleman!"

"I try to be," said Jack, bitterly.

Then she brightened.

"But here! I'll take that back. Of course you're a gentleman. But I'm going to scold you. I'm so much, ever so much, older than you are, you know, and ever so much older than Reel is, you know, that, really, I'm going to scold you—both of you—and talk like a mother to you."

She was assuming this great age, for she was but about seventeen.

"Now, see here," she said, laughing, "shake hands and be friends, can't you? Isn't there something I can do to bridge over the bloody chasm? Both of you are nice fellows, and I wish you could be friends! Don't you think if you'd try——"

"I don't want him for my friend!" shouted Reel, angrily.

"Come now, Reel; you and Mr. Lightfoot ought to be good friends!"

"My opinion is like Reel's," said Jack; "I don't want him for my friend."

"Oh, dear me! Young men are such exasperating creatures. If you won't be friends you can quit fighting."

"I'm through," said Jack.

Reel turned on him fiercely.

"But I'm not through with you, Lightfoot!"

He put his handkerchief to his nose, as if he expected to find blood.

"From this on look out for me!" he threatened.

"Bah! I shan't let your threats trouble me," cried Jack.

"Mr. Lightfoot," said the girl, "will you stop quarreling and walk with me uptown? I need an escort."

"Certainly," Jack answered.

He was astonished by this request. He had expected that when she went on toward town she would accompany Reel.

They left Reel standing by the fence, tenderly feeling of his face as if he doubted it was all there, and they walked together along the path.

"Mr. Lightfoot, I want you to be my friend, and I want to be yours. Can't you let up on Reel, for that reason?"

"All that you saw was his fault," Jack insisted.

"You could have kept from striking him."

"I don't think so; he made me too mad. What was said I don't care to repeat. Then, after I knocked him down, he drew a revolver on me. He's as big as I am, and as strong, and——"

"But there is such a thing as not noticing things," she urged. "Couldn't you keep away from him?"

"I did; and he had me arrested."

"But hereafter?" she begged.

"Miss Livingston, I was in Cranford before Reel Snodgrass came here, and probably I shall be here after he has gone away. I expect to walk on the streets and conduct myself just as I've always done. If you don't want me to have trouble with him, talk with him, and tell him to keep away from me and to stop lying about me more than I can stand."

"Oh, dear!" she cried. "There you go again! Don't you believe in turning one cheek, if somebody smites you on the other?"

"Sometimes, perhaps; that depends, I fancy."

"But now I want you to be friends; and if you can't be that, to be my friend, at least."

"Glad to do that," said Jack.

"It would be so pleasant here in Cranford if these troubles could be ended. Why can't you young fellows get along nicely, as the girls do?"

"Do they?" said Jack. "I'm awfully glad to know that girls never quarrel or tell tales on each other."

"Now, you're laughing at me!"

"Am I?"

"Of course you are. But I'll forgive you. And come and see me sometime. I've never had half a chance to get acquainted with you and your cousin, Tom. And your sister, tell her that I'm coming down soon to make a call on her."

Lily Livingston was really a bright and attractive girl. Whether she was hypocritical, as Skeen declared, or a girl of straightforward truthfulness, she was still very charming, and before she and Jack separated she had quite won him from his fierce and angry mood and left him laughing heartily at some witty remark she had made.

CHAPTER III.

REEL TURNS TEMPTER.

But the mad rage that seethed now in the heart of Reel Snodgrass did not so soon pass away.

He had already been drinking a little, which was one thing that had caused him to begin the trouble there in the path with Jack.

After Jack and Lily were gone, Reel went down to the lake, and, taking the other path, which led to the main street, he went on into town that way.

Going up to his room in the Cranford House, where he stopped with Delancy, he took another drink of the

whisky which Delancy had brought there for his own use. Delancy had been drinking, too, since the trial—drinking to steady his nerves, which had been badly shaken by Jack's sharp examination.

Delancy came in, just as Reel was pouring the fiery liquor down his throat. He was not in a good humor, for he had seen Lily Livingston walking with Jack Lightfoot.

"What was she—aw—walking with Lightfoot for?" he grunted.

Delancy laid claim to Lily Livingston, and rumor had it that sometime they expected to marry.

"Curse him!" howled Reel.

He took another drink, and Delancy helped himself to one.

"What are you cursing him for, don't y' know?"

"Everything!" said Reel, his face taking some color, whereas, when Delancy began to feel the effect of alcohol, his face became a ghastly white.

"What am I cursing him for? Everything. See that?"

He dropped into a chair and pointed to his swollen nose.

"Has he—has he been—aw—fighting you?" gasped Delancy.

"He knocked me down! I should have killed him if Lily Livingston hadn't come along and stopped the blooming row."

He took out his revolver and threw it on the bed.

Delancy twisted his cane across his shoulders and stared.

"Aw, really—fighting you? That is—aw—why she came uptown with him?"

"Yes, that's the reason."

Delancy took a chair.

"It's—aw—better than what I thought, anyway, y' know!"

He looked at Reel, while the latter went to the mirror to examine his swollen proboscis.

"Why—aw—if you cawn't whip him yourself, why don't you hire some one to do it for you? Blawst his side, that's what I'd do!"

"Who could I get?"

"Aw, don't y' know, for money, you can get plenty of fellahs who would do that."

Delancy had plenty of money, and it was his belief that money can do anything. It did a good many things for him, he knew.

"Name somebody," said Reel. "I'll give you fifty dollars if you'll whip him." He laughed harshly.

But when Delancy had gone out again the thought planted by him had taken root.

As a result, Reel that evening met Nicholas Flint, the leader of the "Gang," as certain of the worst boys of the town were called.

Nick Flint had a dark face and an Apache look of cruelty and cunning. He was not devoid of brains. Even to be a leader of bad boys one must have some intellect. Yet when he went to school he studied as little as he could.

Reel Snodgrass had been drinking rather heavily since his encounter with Jack Lightfoot. The more he drank the more that memory rankled and the more reckless and vindictive he became. But for the recklessness engendered by drink he would not have gone to Nick Flint; caution would have kept him from doing that.

Nick was standing in the yard at his home, on the outskirts of the town, when Reel came along with loafing steps and slyly exhibited to him a bottle of whisky.

Though Nick really was not an Indian, he had all of the Indian love of liquor, and when he saw that bottle he came hurriedly out at the gate.

"Something good to drink, eh?" he said, wiping his dark hand thirstily across his mouth.

"Some of the best going," Reel answered; "Delancy bought it and I collared it. Come along, if you'd like some of it."

Nick did not try to resist. Temptations like that were a joy to him. His black eyes sparkled.

"Sure thing!" he said, and they walked together down the road.

When out of sight of the house Reel gave him the bottle and Nick tipped it over his dark nose.

"Here, don't swallow it all at once!" cried Reel.

Nick yielded it reluctantly.

"That's all right," he said, wiping his lips. "I haven't had a drink as good as that since the time Wilson Crane stole the whisky from his father's office and brought it to some of us fellows up in that old hay barn south of town."

"That was before Jack Lightfoot reformed him, I suppose?" said Reel, with a sneer.

"Oh, he ain't reformed! He's just playing good for a while. He wants to be in the ball games, and he knows he'd be kicked out if he didn't walk pretty straight. Jube Marlin's another. They're like the kids who get good at Christmas time and go straight along to Sunday school so that they won't be forgotten in the Christmas entertainments and will get their names on the Christmas tree."

"What about Jack Lightfoot himself?" asked Reel, pleased by this kind of talk.

"Just a hypocrite," said Nick.

"You don't like him very well?"

"About as well as you do, I guess. I hate him!"

"Have another drink," said Reel, as if offering a reward for virtue. "If you hate him, why don't you do him up sometime."

"Why don't you?" Nick demanded.

"Sit down here, by this bank," Reel invited, and he offered the liquor bottle again.

His own head was not feeling very steady, and he was more intoxicated than he knew.

"How'd you like to make some money?"

"Show me how I can do it!" cried Nick, eagerly.

"Take another drink. I've heard you've got a pretty hard head."

"I never struck the whisky yet that could knock me out!" Nick boasted.

"That's good; wish I could say the same. But the stuff gets me down in no time."

He fished something out of his pocket.

"See that?"

"Yes; it's a golf ball."

"It looks like one."

"Well, it is one; I've seen plenty of them."

"Have some more of the whisky, and to-morrow come to me and I'll give you a whole bottleful."

"If that isn't a golf ball, what is it?" asked Nick, when he had again "sampled" the whisky.

"It's a golf ball. Did I say it wasn't?"

"I thought you did."

"It's a golf ball, but a peculiar one. In fact, it's a trick golf ball. The trick is to substitute it for a regular golf ball when some one is playing; he will then hit this ball, and it will explode and shower him all over with stuff that looks like ink."

Nick took the ball curiously in his brown fingers and began to heft it by tossing it in his hands.

"Don't—don't do that!" cried Reel, with sudden terror.

"Why, what's the matter with it?"

"I've told you."

Nicholas Flint, as has been stated, was no fool. He knew that the mere fact that he might shower himself with inklike water would not bring that look of fear to Reel's face.

He held the ball gingerly in his fingers a moment, and then passed it back to Reel.

"I don't think I want to fool with it, if you're afraid of it. What's in it—dynamite?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, you acted as if you thought it might explode if I didn't handle it carefully. I'm betting there's something in it that will blow a fellow up. I don't think I want it round me."

He edged away from Reel.

"Don't be silly!" said Reel.

"Well, you're the one that acted silly, if there's nothing in that ball but black water."

"Have another drink."

Nick never refused such an invitation.

"Now," Reel went on, "how much do you want for substituting this ball for a regular golf ball when Jack's playing, so that he'll be sure to hit this ball?"

"I don't think I want to try it."

"He and some others are going to be on the golf links to-morrow forenoon. I heard about the arrangements. In the afternoon that field meet is to take place. The golf business is just to keep them in tune, without too much exercise, for the meet. You could be out on the links; maybe you could get to act as caddie. Sooner or later, of course, Jack will lose sight of his ball, by driving it too hard or losing it in the grass. That will be your chance. You can give him this ball in place of the genuine one. He'll never know the difference."

Nick grinned curiously.

"Am I to throw this ball to him?"

"No—no! Of course not."

"Say, that whisky hasn't gone to my head enough to make me a fool! There's something the matter with that ball!"

"Of course there is. I've told you it was a trick ball."

"Then, why wouldn't it be safe to throw it to him?"

"Why—why it might—well, you see, it might break and spill the black liquid out of it, and then, of course, you wouldn't have the fun of seeing him smash at it and ruin his clothing."

"I guess I don't want to do it."

Reel took out a wad of money, which he had gained from Delancy at poker, and exhibited it to the greedy eyes of Nick Flint.

"See that?"

"Oh, I see it all right."

Nick's eyes had a hungry glare, and he looked as if he wanted to snatch the money and run with it.

"There's fifty dollars, and you can have it, if you'll do what I say."

"And maybe get myself blowed up with dynamite! What good would the money do me then?"

"You—you needn't stand close enough to him when he strikes at the ball."

Reel's whisky-fuddled head has largely lost its caution.

Nick grinned again, sardonically.

"Then it is dynamite; I thought so!"

"No, of course it isn't."

"See here! Because you're half drunk you needn't think I am, if I have been drinking that whisky!"

"Have another drink!"

"Not just now. Go on and say what you was going to say."

"I'll give you fifty dollars to change this ball for the ball Jack is playing with to-morrow."

"Will you give it to me in advance?"

"I'll give you half of it in advance, and half when the trick is done."

"And what if something happens and I go to jail for it?"

Reel winked with drunken slyness.

"How can you? Think how safe it will be! You can claim that you found the ball there in the grass, and that you didn't know anything about it, but supposed naturally that it was Jack's ball."

"I guess it's worth more than fifty!" said Nick, cautiously.

Yet he was hungering for that money.

"Fifty dollars for five minutes work! Think of it!"

"And five years in jail, maybe; maybe twenty in jail, or the gallows."

"You'll never be an hour in jail, I tell you."

"Well, now, see here; if I do take your money and do that, and get into trouble and go to jail, you bet I'll blab on you; I won't go alone!"

The thought took some of the color out of the whisky-red face of Reel Snodgrass.

He took a pull at the bottle, and then he felt better again.

"But how can you get into trouble?" he argued.

"See how easy it is! If you claim that you found the ball there and thought it was Jack's, who can prove that you didn't? There was never anything safer."

"Then why don't you do it?"

"That's easy to explain. In the first place, everybody knows of the recent trouble between Jack and I; and they'd know that I wouldn't hunt a golf ball for him; they'd know at once that something was wrong when the—the ex—I mean the dirty water showered over him."

"Tell me what's in the ball?"

"Colored water—black water."

"That's a lie; it's dynamite."

"Even if it was dynamite, that wouldn't make it worse for you. You want to get even with Jack Lightfoot, don't you? Here's your chance. He thinks you're a tough and low-down trash."

"Did he ever say that?"

"Yes, he did; I've heard him say it many a time."

Nick mouthed a threat and an oath when he heard this lie.

"And here's your chance to get even—to do him up; and nobody can prove a thing on you."

"Let me see that ball."

Reel passed it to him again.

"Handle it carefully!"

"So I won't spoil my clean shirt front with the inky water!"

He winked knowingly. His shirt was much soiled.

"Mr. Reel Snodgrass, for me to put this chunk of dynamite—this little bomb that looks like a golf ball—where Jack Lightfoot will be sure to hit it and blow himself to kingdom come——"

"'Sh!" Reel warned, looking quickly around. "Somebody may hear you!"

"Somebody will hear this, when it goes off."

"But somebody may be lying in those bushes behind us. Talk low."

He looked anxiously at the bushes, in the growing dusk.

"For me to do that," said Nick, "will cost you more than fifty dollars—it will cost you fifty before I begin, and fifty more when it's done. And if nothing happens—if I put the ball there and nothing happens, I'm to have the money anyhow."

"Not on your life! You'd trick me; you'd put a real golf ball there, and then claim the money."

It was what Nick had thought of doing.

"Well, now, what do you say? Fifty before I begin and fifty when it's done?"

For a moment Reel struggled with something within him. The evil conquered.

"All right," he said, whispering the words. "Here's the fifty. Count it. And to-morrow at noon, if you've done the trick, I'll meet you right here, behind these bushes, and give you the second fifty. I haven't got it now, but I'll get it out of Delancy to-night with a game of poker."

"You couldn't git me into a game with him?" Nick asked, with a laugh and a twist of his face.

He was so conscienceless that even the contemplation of a great crime could not move him.

CHAPTER IV.

ON THE GOLF LINKS.

On the golf links the next forenoon were several pretty girls, as well as athletic young fellows.

The girls were Nellie Conner, Kate Strawn, Lily Livingston, Susie Powers and Daisy Lightfoot.

Susie was from Cardiff, but she had come over that morning on the train for the purpose of being in Cranford to witness the field events that afternoon on the old fair grounds, where everything was ready for track athletics.

As a consequence, Ned Skeen was one of the golfers that morning, and Ned wasn't saying anything about girls. If he "hated" other girls, it was pretty certain that for the time at least Susie Powers, the pretty golden-haired miss from Cardiff had won him over to her side completely.

Jack was playing with Nellie Conner and Lafe Lampton with Kate Strawn. Brodie Strawn was playing with Lily Livingston, and Jack's sister, Daisy, was playing with her cousin Tom.

Jack had driven his ball out, and Nellie Conner now "teed" hers and sent it skipping in the same direction.

A number of people were on the golf links.

Seen among others was the dark face of Nick Flint, but Reel Snodgrass was not there.

Nick had a ball in his pocket, which he touched gingerly with his fingers. He walked carefully, for he was actually afraid to move it roughly or jolt it. He was sure now that it contained dynamite.

His dark face was flushed, for he had been drinking heavily that morning to keep his nerve. His flushed face was all, however, which showed that he had been drinking at all. In his hip pocket, with a small whisky bottle, was the fifty dollars given him by Reel.

Lily Livingston had tried to induce Reel to go to the links that morning; but he said he was sick, and, indeed, he looked so nervous and altogether so wretched that she was convinced he spoke the truth. Lily's hope was that on the golf links she might do something to bring Reel and Jack together and do away with the angry results of that quarrel and fight.

Reel's mind, as he cowered in a chair at the Cranford House, was on the links, even if he was not there himself.

He was sure that golf ball contained dynamite.

It had been given to him by Boralmo, and Boralmo had said it was filled with dynamite. It had been Boralmo's drunken hope that Reel would himself use it against Jack Lightfoot, which shows the deadly and murderous character of Boralmo, as well as his cow-

ardliness. But Reel was as much of a coward in this respect as Boralmo himself.

He kept the liquor bottle to his lips a good deal, that he might not think too much of what was to be done on the links, and he kept whispering to himself over and over that no one could know he had anything to do with it.

He had not even told Delancy, whom he told almost everything, and he had determined if Nick Flint betrayed him or turned suspicion toward him that he would deny the whole thing and point out how improbable it was.

"But he won't tell!" he thought. "It will be safer for him to say that he found the ball in the grass. He'd be a fool to say anything else. It wouldn't get him out of the hole to claim that I gave him the ball and hired him; he would still go to jail, or swing for it, and he knows that much—he's no fool."

Yet, even to keep up this belief, Reel found that he needed a good deal of whisky.

He was resorting to the old method of "keeping his spirits up by putting spirits down."

Out on the links matters were interesting and lively; there was laughter there and pleasant talk, bright faces and general joyousness.

Is anything more needed to show that the way to peace and happiness is also the path of honor and uprightness? The two most unhappy young fellows in Cranford that day were Reel Snodgrass and Nick Flint. They were fairly shivering under the terror of what they intended to do.

If, among the happy hearts on the links that forenoon, one was happier than another, that heart was Ned Skeen's.

He was teaching Susie Powers how to play golf and explaining to her the game. The links lay before them, an undulating field beyond the borders of the town, which was crossed by some ridges and ditches and lost itself finally over the brow of a hill, where some trees and rocks showed.

"On these links, you see," said Ned, pointing out the golf grounds, "there are, altogether, eighteen holes, about four inches wide and six inches deep. They are at considerable distances apart. The ball is to be knocked into each of these holes in the fewest number of shots possible."

He stooped down and began to build up a "tee," or little conical mound, of sand.

"The game is a sort of croquet, you know, on a big scale, with holes instead of wickets and posts. It takes a lot of walking, for the holes are from one hun-

dred to four hundred yards apart. Around each hole, you see, is a smooth space of about twenty yards, called a 'putting green.' That is to help the player in making careful strokes."

He was stooping, patting his tee into shape, and now he put his golf ball on top of it, as if it were a bird sitting in a nest.

"You're allowed to use a tee like this for your first shot toward a hole; after that you've got to drive the ball from wherever it lies. And some funny places you find it in, too, sometimes. But you've got to do the best you can with it. And then there are rough places, or ditches, or walls, maybe, that are called hazards. When there naturally aren't enough of these on the links, artificial ones are made, to make the drives difficult."

Susie was paying close attention, her cheeks dimpling with smiles, and her rosy lips asking questions, and Ned felt rather superior as he thus instructed her.

"I think it must be lots of fun," she said.

"Fun! It's great. Some of the fellows don't like it; think it isn't exciting enough. But that is because"—he looked at her archly—"they haven't any young lady friend to play with, I guess. It helps it out wonderfully, if you've a girl in the game with you."

"Oh, does it?" she asked, innocently, though her cheeks flushed. "Then you've got to have some one to play with?"

"Oh, no, you can play it by yourself, if you want to. But it makes it—er—more—more interesting, you know!"

He looked at her again. She was a pretty girl, and Ned actually thought she was the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

"I should think it would be stupid if you had to play it alone!"

"Well, it would be—for me!" he declared, boldly.

"Then you have—have some other girl to play with, when I'm not here?"

She gave him a sidelong glance that held a deal of mischief.

"No—no!" Ned protested. "Of course not. I hate—I mean I don't care for any of the girls here. I play with the fellows; with Jack, or Lafe, or some of the others. It's great exercise, and builds up your muscles in fine shape. Why, it makes your—your arms as hard as iron."

"I don't think I shall like it, then."

Ned was afraid he was getting into deep water.

"Won't you drive the first ball?" he asked. "I think

you can hit it first stroke. Try to drive it to that hole over there."

He pointed to the hole.

Susie got into position, as instructed, and swung at the ball.

She missed it, and struck the ground so terrific a whack that she almost threw herself down.

"It isn't so easy as it looks, is it?" she asked, while her face reddened and her hands tingled.

"Try it again," urged Ned.

"No, you try it; let's see how you do it!"

Ned swung back his club and let drive at the gutta percha ball, sending it flying toward the first putting green.

"That looks easy."

"It is easy; try again."

He built up the tee for her, placed a ball on it and showed her just how to stand, how to swing with the club and how to drive it out; and this time she did fairly well.

"Oh, you'll play as well as anyone in a little while."

"Do you really think so?" she asked, prettily.

"I know so. You got pretty close to that flag which marks the putting green. That was a splendid drive."

"Was it?"

"Was it? It was just fine. Now we'll go on and find the balls and drive them for the hole. You know we've got to see with how few strokes we can hole them. Keep count of the strokes, for that's the game—to get them into the holes with the fewest strokes. I'm betting you beat me!"

"I hope you don't really bet, Mr. Skeen!"

"Oh, no—no; I never bet; wouldn't think of doing such a thing. But call me Ned, please; it sounds stiff to call me Mr. Skeen."

"Well, then, you mustn't call me Miss Powers, but Susie."

She blushed again and looked at him shyly.

Ned hardly knew whether he was playing golf or what he was doing, when she looked at him in that way; and he was resolved on one thing—he would play such a poor game that it would last an awfully long time, and he would let Susie Powers win.

"I'll do it," he said, gleefully; "I'll call you Susie if you'll call me Ned. Hello, we're right at the putting green already, aren't we! I didn't realize we had walked so fast. Now, see me hole my ball."

But he didn't; he had suddenly become so poor a player that he drove it not more than two yards, though he made a swing apparently which ought to have sent the ball over a nearby hill.

"Oh, this is fun!" said the girl.

"Fun?" cried Ned. "Fun isn't any name for it!"

"I think I understand now why people like golf so well."

"Eh? Oh, yes; I think I do, too."

"I think I should like to play it every day."

"So should I; and every minute of every day."

"But you have to be in that field meet this afternoon?"

"Oh, bother the field meet! Yes, I suppose I shall have to be in that."

Ned sighed. He wished there were no athletic field meets, never had been any, and never would be any again; he thought he should like to play golf forever—with Susie Powers to play with him.

Jack and Nellie had gone on ahead of Ned and Susie, but they had watched them.

"Ned's got it bad," said Jack; and he laughed, a laugh in which Nellie Conner joined.

"And he says he doesn't like girls!" she cried.

CHAPTER V.

NED FLINT AND THE "DYNAMITE" BALL.

Tom Lightfoot and Daisy had joined with Brodie Strawn and Lily Livingston in a "foursome," as a four-handed game is called; but Jack and Nellie still played on together.

Many people were out on the links, for the day was fine and even people who didn't play golf liked to see others play and took pleasure in walking about over the links in the pleasant summer weather.

Among these "visitors" was, of course, Nick Flint.

He kept as near to Jack and Nellie as he could, usually in front of them, from a hundred to two hundred yards or more, looking all the time for a chance to substitute what he now called the "dynamite" ball for the one Jack was playing.

Once or twice his courage came so near failing him that he was on the point of leaving the links, but each time a sly pull at the whisky bottle he carried in his pocket put "iron" into him again and made him resolve to go ahead with the murderous deed and earn that other fifty dollars.

Fifty dollars was to Nick Flint a tremendous sum of money.

He had never in any honest way earned that much in his life; and as he was too lazy to work and his parents were rather poor and could give him no money, or a very little, he was always "hard up," as he called it.

The most of the money that came into his pockets he secured by gambling with other members of the "Gang," but that did not yield him much of an income.

Now and then, just to make himself feel better and stiffen his courage, he looked at the fifty dollars he had already received, counting the bills to make sure that it really was so large a sum as fifty dollars.

Fifty more on top of that would be a hundred!

And a hundred dollars, to the mind of Nick Flint, was almost a fortune! "A hundred dollars!" he whispered at times. "Just think how much that is—a hundred dollars!"

At last the opportunity he sought came to him, almost when he began to think it would never come.

Jack and Nellie were playing for the ninth hole, and had driven for it heavily.

Jack's ball struck against a rock and bounced off into a grassy spot, where it could not be found.

Jack and Nellie both hunted for it; and then Nick Flint, sauntering by after they had given the thing up and were about to substitute another ball, "found" it.

"Here it is!" he cried.

There was a queer gasping choke in his voice as he said it, which Jack's keen ears did not fail to notice.

Yet Jack was not in a suspecting mood.

The fact that Nick had found the ball where both he and Nellie had failed was not a suspicious circumstance of itself.

Nick did not touch the ball, but merely pointed to it, and moved back as Jack came up and saw it.

"Thank you," said Jack, speaking to Nick, "your eyes are good."

Then he said to Nellie:

"I guess I can drive it from here."

He seemed about to lift his "driver" and smash at the ball.

Nick was altogether too close, and, a great fear now sweeping with overpowering force through his whiskey-soaked brain, and he actually turned and fled wildly away.

Nellie stared at him, and Jack, seeing that he was running, lowered his driver and stared, too.

"What frightened him?" asked the girl.

Jack stood up straight and stared hard at Nick, who now turned to glance back, and Jack saw the fear that filled that dark, Indian-like face.

"Why, he couldn't look more frightened if he'd seen a ghost!" Nellie cried.

Nick was running on again.

"Here!" Jack shouted. "Stop, there, I want a word with you!"

But Nick ran on, without again looking back.

Jack looked at the ball and took it up in his hands, and Nellie came close to look at it.

"It's your ball?"

"Why, I suppose so; it must be. Here's where mine was lost."

He scanned it closely.

"It doesn't show any marks of having been battered, and——"

"It looks too clean for yours, doesn't it?" she asked.

Jack shook it.

"Why, it sounds awfully funny!" she said. "I thought I heard something rattle in it."

"Who ever heard of anything rattling in a golf ball?"

Jack shook it again.

"That was just your imagination," he declared. "I don't hear anything rattle inside of it."

"I thought I did!"

He shook it close by her ear.

"But it isn't your ball!" she asserted.

"It may be another that some one lost here, and Nick, seeing it here and seeing us hunting for my ball, naturally thought this must be mine. But why did he run; and why did he look scared?"

"Yes, why did he?"

"Give it up," said Jack. "Perhaps he's half drunk. I thought I smelled liquor on his breath. People do queer and unaccountable things sometimes, if they've been drinking. Well, if it isn't mine I'll call it mine, in place of the one we can't find, and we'll go ahead with the game."

Though the whole thing was strange, there was really nothing in the appearance of the ball itself to make them suspicious.

Nellie stood back while Jack lifted his driver. He needed a good stroke to get the ball out, and the club went back with a long swing over his head almost to his left shoulder.

He presented a striking picture, and Nellie Conner could not help thinking how handsome he was as he swung for that drive.

Nick Flint had stopped, and now stood staring, his dark Indian face actually pale and the sweat of fear and almost of remorse standing out on his dark forehead.

He wanted to yell to Jack in warning—yell to him not to make that stroke; yet fear held him, chilled him, now, and fairly paralyzed him.

In that brief second, as he saw the club flashing in the sun and Jack swinging, he would have given the whole of the hundred dollars, which seemed so large a sum to him, if he had not gone into this thing.

He felt as if he were choking, and reached back to get his whisky flask, and as he saw the club flash downward he involuntarily shut his eyes.

But—he heard no explosion.

When he opened his eyes he saw that Jack had driven the ball a few yards, and that he and Nellie were walking together toward it.

Then Nick Flint felt himself become as limp as a rag, and dropped down on the ground, trembling all over and unable to stand.

Why—why had the dynamite ball not exploded?

That was the question that plowed through his brain.

CHAPTER VI.

WHAT WAS IN THE BALL.

Jack Lightfoot and Nellie Conner uttered low cries of surprise, as the ball flew out heavily, without any spring to it, from beneath Jack's club; and little wonder, for as it flew out it cracked open and something bright and shining spilled out of it on the grass.

It had dropped but a few yards away, and as they hurried to it, and just before they reached it, they saw a bright trail of what appeared to be shining dew-drops.

Nellie fell to her knees, as she came to these, and picked one of them up.

Jack was at her side, and he picked up another.

"Diamonds!" she cried, as if she could not believe her senses.

"Are they?—can they be? Oh, they can't be!"

The thing seemed impossible.

She held up the bright object, and saw it catch and flash the light of the sun.

She and Jack began hurriedly to pick up the others.

They saw the golf ball, cracked open, and in it a shining drop of what looked to be dew; but this was another diamond.

There could be no doubt that the diamonds had come out of the golf ball.

Nellie and Jack were very much excited, as well as astonished.

"They're certainly diamonds," said Jack, "or else they're mighty fine imitations."

"And they were in the ball!"

"Yes, in the ball!"

"Isn't that the queerest thing you ever heard of?"

"It is."

They hunted in the grass, to make sure they had not overlooked any of the shining gems.

When Jack glanced in the direction Nick Flint had taken he saw that young rascal reclining on the ground some distance away staring in his direction.

"Do you suppose Nick could have known what was in this ball?" he asked.

"Why, I don't know! But, of course, he couldn't! He never saw this ball before, any more than we did."

"Of course he couldn't. I'm awake, am I, Nellie?"

She laughed almost hysterically.

"Why, of course you're awake, Jack!"

"I began to think I must be dreaming."

They were again eagerly examining the diamonds.

"If these are genuine they're worth something," he said.

"But tell me, Jack, how they got into that golf ball."

"You tell me!"

"The ball is a mere shell—look at it; and they were inside of it!"

"I'm puzzled by it."

He looked again toward Nick, and then shouted to him, asking him to come over there.

Instead of doing so, Nick jumped to his feet and started on at a sharp run.

"Doesn't he act just as if he were crazy!" cried Nellie.

"It begins to look as if he thought there was something in this golf ball."

"The diamonds?"

"No, something dangerous—something that would injure some one."

"It is awfully queer, the way he runs!"

"Queer is no name for it!"

He again shouted to Nick, and held up the broken shell of the fake golf ball.

But Nick, if he heard him, did not stop; nor did he stop until he had left the grounds behind him.

Jack took an old envelope from his pocket, and in the presence of Nellie Conner dropped the diamonds into it, and then put them safely in one of his pockets.

"We'll take another look," she said, excitedly; "maybe there are more golf balls round here with diamonds growing in them!"

Her cheeks were now as red as peonies.

So absorbed were they in their search, in their talk of their wonderful discovery and its possible meaning, that they had not taken another stroke with golf

club before those who were playing "foursome" came up, and behind them Kate Strawn and Lafe Lampton.

When they had seen the fake golf ball and the diamonds that had been in it, and had heard the story of it, and of how Nick Flint had fled in apparent fear from the links, they were as wildly astonished as Jack and Nellie had been.

Tom examined the diamonds carefully, producing a magnifying glass from his pocket for the purpose.

Kate Strawn had on one of her fingers a diamond ring, and the stone in it was compared with those found.

"They're diamonds," said Tom, emphatically; "I don't think there's a doubt of it. And they're valuable."

"This ring cost nearly a hundred dollars," said Kate, "and the diamond in it isn't nearly as big nor half as brilliant as any one of those."

"They're Jack's and Nellie's, by right of discovery!" cried Lafe, enthusiastically.

"I'd interview that scoundrel, Nick Flint!" said Brodie.

"That's a good idea," said Jack, "and I'll do it."

Jack was ready to leave the links at once for this purpose.

The golf matches stopped off short.

All the players who were Jack's friends and had seen the diamonds were now so excited they knew they could not play any longer.

Therefore they went back to town together, leaving Ned Skeen and Susie Powers, who knew nothing of what had happened and had no eyes nor ears for anything but each other.

At the leading jeweler's they stopped, and, going in together, they exacted a promise of secrecy from him, and asked him to say what the stones were worth.

He examined them carefully, and at first rather skeptically.

But his face soon showed his surprise.

"Those stones are not large, and they are not many in number, but if I'm any judge of such matters, they're worth two or three thousand dollars!" he announced.

Lafe swung his cap, and could hardly repress a yell.

"You can have diamond rings and pins and anything you want now," said Kate to Nellie, slyly pinching her cheek, which was red with excitement.

"But they're not mine!" she protested.

"They belong to you and Jack."

"No, it wasn't my golf ball that was lost; if they

belong to either of us it's to Jack; but the owner will come along, probably."

Lafe went on with Jack to Nick Flint's, and Jack took the hollow shell of the fake golf ball.

The diamonds had been left in the jeweler's safe for security against loss.

Nick did not see Jack and Lafe coming until they were right at the house; but when he did discover them he scampered out at the back door, and was just crossing the fence that would have let him out into the woodland beyond when Jack's sharp call stopped him.

He turned round doggedly. He knew it was no use to run, and that if he did so he could be overhauled.

"What do you want?" he snarled.

His dark, Indian-like face was of a sickly yellow and his black eyes had a staring look of fright.

"Where did you get that golf ball you gave me?" Jack asked.

"I didn't give you any golf ball!"

"The one you showed me—the one you said was mine?"

"I—I just saw it there in the grass."

Nick was shaking now like a leaf. He believed that Jack had opened the ball and had found dynamite inside of it.

"You didn't put it there?" Jack asked.

"No."

"And you don't know how it got there?"

"Why—why you knocked it there, I—I suppose!"

"Do you know what was in it?"

"In it? Was anything in it?"

"You don't know what was in it?"

"I—I don't know anything about it; I never saw it before, and I thought it was yours. Wasn't it yours?"

"It wasn't mine."

"It wasn't mine; I never saw it before."

"You're dead sure of that?" demanded Lafe, sharply. "What made you run when Jack called to you?"

"Of course I'm sure of it, and I didn't hear him call to me."

"What made you run?" Lafe asked.

"Oh, just for exercise."

"You wouldn't want what was found in that ball?" Jack asked.

Nick seemed about to drop in his tracks; his jaw fell and his eyes rolled.

"I—I don't know what you're talking about."

"That's all," said Lafe, dryly.

He and Jack turned to walk away.

Nick stared at them, feeling weak and strange, and began to congratulate himself on his narrow "squeak," as he termed it.

"Gee!" he gurgled. "There was dynamite in it, and they're looking for the fellow that put it there. Well, they'll never get it out of me. I'll die before I'll admit that I ever saw that ball before."

Jack and Lafe were hardly out of sight before Nick was made nervous again by seeing Reel Snodgrass slip toward the house from the woodland.

The explosion for which Reel had listened with all the horror of expectation had not come, and he had seen Nick appear first from the direction of the golf links, and then Jack and his friends.

He had observed that Nick was almost running, being in such a hurry and so excited that he stumbled as he hastened along; and he had seen that Jack's crowd was just as much excited.

Therefore he had hurried by a roundabout way that took him through the woodland to Nick Flint's to question him.

Nick walked heavily out to meet him, and they dropped down together on the bank, where, the evening before, the diabolical plan was concocted.

"What's the trouble?" Reel asked.

"That's just what I was going to ask you," said Nick. "What was in that ball?"

"Dy—I mean that black water I told you about!"

"Well, it's thundering funny," said Nick. "I done as you told me to, and I reckon I earned my money in doing it, too. I substituted that ball for one Jack lost, and I saw him strike at it with his club, but not a danged thing happened. What did you expect would happen?"

"Noth—nothing!"

"You didn't expect anything would happen?"

"N-no; of course not. Except that the—the water——"

"Stow that black-water business! There was never any black water in that golf ball, and you know it."

"What was in it, then?"

"Dynamite, I thought."

"What—what made you think so?"

"I ain't so big a fool as I look. You just now

started to say dynamite yourself. I know you thought there was dynamite, or something of the kind, in it, and you wanted me to blow Jack Lightfoot up with it."

"Sh!" whispered Reel. "Don't talk so loud!"

"Well, I exchanged the golf balls, and now I want my money."

"I don't believe you exchanged them! You weakened!"

"Oh, did I? Well, there was something in that ball, and I think it was dynamite. Jack struck at it, but I suppose he missed it; or at least he didn't crack it hard enough to explode it. But he must have opened it and found dynamite in it, for just a minute or so ago he and Lafe came down here and asked me questions about it."

"You—you didn't—didn't tell them?"

"I told them I'd never seen the ball before, and pretended I didn't know what they were talking about. But they've got the ball all right, and they've found out that there's something wrong with it. I think they've opened it. If they hadn't, why would they come asking those questions? But I denied everything."

"That's right; stick to it."

"I'll stick to it for money—see? I done what you told me to, and earned that extra fifty dollars, and I'm going to have it, or I'll go straight to 'em and blab the whole thing."

Reel's hand went into his pocket with sudden alacrity.

"I intended to pay you, of course."

"You wasn't acting like it. And, say—wasn't that dynamite?"

"I don't know what it was—but you keep still about it. Here's the goods."

He thrust a wad of bills into Nick's brown fingers.

Nick opened the bills and counted them, to make sure the fifty dollars was all there. Yet his greedy eyes still held their look of fear.

"You're sure you didn't tell them anything—didn't mention my name?" Reel asked, anxiously.

"I didn't. I didn't mention anything. I simply denied the whole business, and said I happened to see the ball there and supposed it was Jack's."

"Stick to it—stick to it, no matter what happens!"

"Oh, I'm going to, you bet! Nothing will ever drag anything different out of me."

"That's right—that's right. And maybe sometime I'll have something else for you to do, and some more money."

The greedy light deepened in the eyes of Nick Flint.

Already he had made up his mind that by threatening Reel with "blabbing" he could get more money out of him.

"Oh, I'll pull his leg for him!" he whispered to himself, as he saw Reel slip back into the woodland. "This gives me the hold I want, and I'll pull his leg hard. He can get all the money he needs out of that fool dude, Delancy Shelton, and he'll have to divvy some of it with me."

CHAPTER VII.

JACK LIGHTFOOT'S ALL-SPORTS TEAM.

Though he was still terrified by what had occurred, almost as much so, it seemed, as if the golf ball had contained dynamite and Jack's club had exploded it and he had been blown to pieces, Nick Flint could not keep away from the fair grounds that afternoon.

Curiosity and a desire to learn, if possible, just what was in that golf ball drew him; yet he went in fear and trembling, and in order to strengthen his shaking knees he swallowed off at once all that remained of the liquor Reel Snodgrass had given him.

Though he went early, he found a big crowd of people streaming through the gates and the grounds already pretty well filled.

Nick had to "cough up" twenty-five cents of the money Reel had given him, to gain admission. Ordinarily he would not have paid that quarter, but would have contented himself with peering through some knothole in the fence, or viewing the athletic events from some nearby housetop or tree, as most of the other members of the Gang did.

The athletic club of the high school and the athletic club of the Cranford Academy had selected athletes to meet a crack team from the schools of the city of Cardiff, and the winners were to get the gate money.

The old carriage shop in which the high-school boys

had their gymnasium was not yet wholly paid for, but it would be paid for that afternoon if Jack's team had the luck and the "stuff" in them to win, for the crowd was coming, nothing daunted by the price of admission.

The Cardiff team was on the ground and out on the cinder track, and they were handsome-looking fellows in their light athletic clothing.

Jack had been chosen captain of the Cranford team, and every member of it had been diligently training for this meet.

Lafe Lampton and Orson Oxx were to show what they could do at hammer throwing. Wilson Crane and Phil Kirtland, Ned Skeen and some others, with Jack and Tom Lightfoot, were to exhibit their running powers at various distances, and, besides this, there were to be hurdle leaping and various other forms of athletic sport.

The Cranford people were strong believers in the merits of the young fellows of Cranford, and, knowing that this money would go in part to pay off the debt of the high-school boys' gym—it was to be divided, if won, between the gyms of the high school and the academy—they were not only showing their pride and belief in the boys of Cranford, but had organized a strong band of rooters, whose sole business was to sing songs and bellow for Cranford.

These screaming partisans were already getting into position in the reserved seats of the old fair ground, which brought them right in front of the place where the events were, for the most part, to be pulled off.

These were some of the things which Nicholas Flint saw, and of which he heard, when he had paid his quarter and had squeezed through the wide double gates.

He saw Jack and his team near the dressing tents.

As he stood on the outskirts of the crowd—he was still afraid to go close—he felt himself touched on the arm.

Nick jumped as if he had been shot at, for the thought went through him that here was an officer come to arrest him.

When he turned, he saw the weak, pale face of Delancy Shelton.

Delancy was smoking a cigarette, and he offered one to Nick, who accepted it greedily.

"Could you—aw—come over by the fence there, behind those stands—aw—in a minute? I'd like to speak with you, don't y' know."

Of course Nick always associated Delancy in his mind with Reel.

"What does he want now?" he snarled.

"Aw—what does who want?"

"Reel Snodgrass."

"Aw—you're a queer guy, don't y' know! I hadn't heard that he wanted anything."

"He ain't over there? Reel ain't over there?"

"Man, what's the matter with you? You stare at me as if I were a ghost, don't y' know. No, Reel isn't over there. I want to see you myself."

Nick still stared—that strange and, to Delancy, inexplicable look on his dark face.

"Did he tell you about—has he been saying anything to you?"

"I think you're nutty, don't y' know—bats in your garret, don't y' know! You've been drinking."

"Is that anything to you?" Nick snapped, nervously.

"You come over there," said Delancy, pointing with a sweep of his cane. "I want to see you a minute."

"Is that all?"

"Sure thing!"

"Then I don't think I want to go, unless"—he hesitated—"there's money in it—money for me!"

The remembrance of that hundred dollars increased his thirst for money, and he knew that Delancy was reputed to be loaded down with money.

"Come over and have a talk with me," said Delancy. "Too many people moving round here, don't y' know; and—aw—y' know, I don't want to be seen here talking with you."

Nick's black eyes flashed sudden fire.

"I'm as good as you are!"

Delancy moved away; but Nick saw that he moved in the direction indicated; and five minutes later Nick was behind the stands mentioned, and face to face with the dude.

No one else was in sight; and the hum of voices from the swarming crowds on the other side of the stands made it unlikely that anyone could hear anything that was said there.

"Now, what is it?" snapped Nick. "Reel's been talking to you, and I know it!"

"Aw—he always talks to me a good deal, don't y' know. I'm a friend of his."

"And he's told you about that. You needn't lie and say he hasn't, for I know better. And he said he'd not say a word."

Delancy was puzzled.

"You're—aw—drinking, I think. Anyway, you're talking nonsense."

"He thinks I didn't try to do Jack up?"

"I don't know what he thinks, but if you—aw—could do Jack up, I'd like it, don't y' know. You mean Jack Lightfoot?"

Nick wheeled about to see if anyone was near.

"Don't talk so thundering loud!" he said. "Do you want to get me pinched?"

"If you're clever about it, there won't be any danger that you'll be—aw—pinched, as you call it."

"Clever about it?"

"Yes, don't y' know. Jack's going to run this afternoon against Sam Monroe, of Cardiff. I've been a fool, I guess, and have gone and put up some bets on Monroe. I wanted Jack beaten, don't y' know."

"And did you think by betting against him that would beat him?"

"Aw—he's a clevah runner, don't y' know—deuced clevah, they tell me; but so is Monroe! Now, if something could be done to keep Jack from winning that race I'd give you twenty dollars."

Money seemed to be blowing to greedy Nick in a gale. But the fact that he had already been paid a hundred dollars made him value his services more highly than heretofore.

"Tell me what you want done?" he asked, in a whisper. "But no more of that other business, I tell you now!"

Delancy stared and swung his cane.

"I'm not going to risk the hangman again," Nick

went on, "not for anybody's money. Why, I've been in a regular sweat, ever since that!"

"I guess you know what you're talking about," said Delancy, pulling at his cigarette, "but I don't."

"You don't?"

"I've said it—I don't!"

He swung his cane again.

"You might tell me, though; and then we'll understand each other better. We'll get on faster, y' know."

"Well, if you really don't know, I won't tell you."

"All I know is what I've said—I want you to plan something that will beat Jack Lightfoot in that race. I don't care what it is."

"And you'll pay me?"

"Twenty-five dollars."

"Make it fifty," said the greedy rascal. "And pay me the twenty-five down now."

"No, I won't. I've been bled too much lately. I won't pay you anything down; but if you can keep Jack from winning that race come to me and you can have twenty-five."

"Is that the best you'll do? I won't do it for that."

"All right," said Delancy, with apparent indifference. "I've only got fifty dollars up on that race, y' know, and I'll lose it before I'll pay more, and I don't know that you can do anything."

He understood Nick Flint better than Reel Snodgrass did, in spite of the fact that he had not Reel's natural brain power.

He walked away, swinging his cane.

"Say!" Nick called after him.

Delancy turned and poured some tobacco smoke through his thin nostrils.

"You've heard what I've said," was his answer. "You can come to me when it's done, if you do anything."

Delancy hardly expected that anything could be done; and at the moment Nick Flint thought the same.

CHAPTER VIII.

JACK'S DEFEAT.

The athletic events were on, and the spectators were cheering.

The opening was a hundred-yards dash, in which Wilson Crane was pitted against Cleve Stormonth, of Cardiff.

Stormonth was reputed to be very fast, in a lightning go of this kind; but the Cranford boys put a lot of faith in those long, slender legs of Wilson Crane.

Kennedy, the constable, was now in his element, for he was starter.

He stood at the head of the cinder track, his revolver filled with blank cartridges, his homely face covered with smiles, and his heart filled with joviality.

"All ready!" he shouted, lifting his pistol, as Wilson and the boy from Cardiff crouched at the starting line.

Bang!

They went down the level stretch with a flashing of bare legs and swinging bare arms, and the people were yelling.

It was a pretty race, but brief; and the Cranford boys howled their delight, when Wilson first breasted the tape.

The judges made their announcement:

"Stormonth, eleven seconds; Crane, ten and two-fifth seconds."

"Wow!" yelled Lafe Lampton. "First blood for Cranford! Wilson, you're a flying machine—oh, you're a hulu!"

Nick Flint heard him; for when the track athletics began Nick crowded close in by the cinder path.

"Oh, you needn't beller so!" was his thought. "Wilson's no better than I am; and you ain't, neither!"

"Stand back!" cried Kennedy, pushing Nick and some others back with his club. "Stand back from the track, everybody."

This enraged Nick still more.

He fancied that it was only favoritism on the part of Jack Lightfoot and some of the others that kept him from being on the baseball nine and engaged in all the other athletic work of the Cranford young fellows.

He did not see that he barred himself out from everything, by the general worthlessness of his character, his own unreliability, his laziness and his quar-

relsome disposition, not to speak of his occasional habits of intoxication.

It is nearly always so—I may say, always so. The fellow with ability and worthiness is the fellow who goes to the head; and the fellows who drop behind deserve to drop behind, for the reason that in some way they are lacking. They lack the ability, or they lack the character, or they lack something which makes for success. But Nick Flint would never be able to see that the lack was in himself. He blamed Jack Lightfoot and Jack's friends.

The one-hundred-and-twenty-yards low hurdles followed, the contestants being Phil Kirtland and Jim Cleveland.

"Stand back!" Kennedy warned again. "The people want to see this thing. All you boys have got to stand back!" And again he pushed Nick and some others back out of the way.

The girls of Cranford were not in the benches, but were near the cinder path, at a point where they could see well.

They smiled upon Kirtland, and fluttered their handkerchiefs to him, as he came leaping from the dressing tent, and was joined by young Cleveland.

Phil was a handsome young fellow, well proportioned, really good-looking, with dark hair and eyes; and, as he came in at the head of the cinder track, in his light running costume, one could see how sinewy and lithe he was. He seemed to be built of steel-spring muscles, covered with a clothing of tanned skin that looked as smooth as velvet. Phil always took good care of his personal appearance.

As he saw the girls waving their handkerchiefs his face flushed with pleasure.

But he did not have much time to pose and look handsome.

Kennedy waved his pistol.

"Are you ready!"

The contestants strained for the start.

Bang!

They were away, flashing down the line toward the hurdles, which they began to take with splendid leaps.

It was a close race, so close that the judges hesitated, finally giving the event to Phil by a narrow margin.

The caller for the judges announced the time in a loud voice:

Kirtland, winner—sixteen and two-fifth seconds.

A running high jump followed; with Tom Lightfoot pitted against Ben Davis, of Cardiff.

Again Cardiff met defeat, and again the Cranford enthusiasts went mad with joy. The judge's announcement was:

"Ben Davis, five feet ten inches; Tom Lightfoot, six feet."

"Wow!" Lafe squalled. "They can't beat us at any old thing!"

He dug up an apple and began to bite into it voraciously.

"If you go to eating now you'll not be able to throw the hammer!" some one warned.

"Oh, won't I? I'm eating to get up strength for that great event."

The organized rooters for Cranford had struck into a song. They had composed it for a victory which they hoped Jack Lightfoot would win, but it came in just as handy now. It was but a variation of the Yale college song: "Here's a Health to Good Old Yale."

"Here's a health to Tommy Lightfoot!
 Drink her down, drink her down!
 Here's a health to Tommy Lightfoot!
 Drink her down, drink her down!
 Here's a health to Tommy Lightfoot!
 For he's lively and he's quick;
 And he makes those Cardiffs sick!
 Drink her down, down, down!"

The next was the two-hundred-and-twenty-yards run, and that was the length of the cinder path, which was a part of the old fair grounds race track.

This was one of the events for which the enthusiastic crowd was waiting; for in this Jack Lightfoot was to appear on the cinder path against the crack runner of the Cardiff team, Julius Chambers.

Chambers was said to be the best amateur runner for that distance in the country; and as the people of Cranford knew that Jack Lightfoot was pretty good, a crack race was anticipated.

If the girls of Cranford had given Phil Kirtland an ovation when he appeared, they redoubled the warmth of it when Jack came from the dressing tent.

And the members of the Cranford team and the rooters simply howled, as if they were going crazy.

Jack might have had his head turned by that glorious reception, if he had not been pretty level-headed.

It warmed his heart. He liked to hear that yell ringing out as if it meant to bang up against the blue skies. He liked to see those fluttering handkerchiefs in the hands of his girl friends, and see the wide-open, yelling mouths of his young chums of the athletic club.

Yes, Jack liked all those things; but they had not enough winning power over him to make him forget what he was there for. He was there to defeat the young fellow from Cardiff, and he was resolved to do it. Then those yells and that cheering would have some justification, but not otherwise.

His gray-blue eyes were shining, nevertheless, and his rather fair face was flushed, as he trotted with the Cardiff boy to the far end of the cinder path, where the race was to begin.

Kennedy had already gone down, and many other people were grouped there, as well as all along the track.

The yells of the Cranford enthusiasts rang out again, as Jack and his competitor turned and got into position; and the Cranford song arose once more, this time presaging victory for Jack.

"Here's a health to brave Jack Lightfoot!
 Drink her down, drink her down!"

Bang! went Kennedy's revolver.

The runners leaped away, coming with the speed of the wind toward the group of spectators near the end of the track and the people in the benches.

The Cranford song was howled now, and hats and caps were waving. The enthusiasts of Cranford deafened the air with their yelling, while the feet of the runners beat a tattoo on the track. Nor was the Cardiff contingent silent; it was yelling, too—yelling for Cardiff and the Cardiff champion.

The spectators were squirming and writhing near the finish line, each trying to get into position to see better; when, as the runners came up, with Jack in the lead, Nick Flint, apparently trying to leap across the track to get to the other side, collided with Jack heavily.

Nick was knocked headlong to the ground, and skidded along the cinder path; while Jack, trying to save himself, was thrown sprawling.

The Cardiff boy passed him and broke through the tape.

A great roar arose, for the excitement at that moment was tremendous. Jack picked himself up, trying to smile; but Nick Flint lay where he had fallen, unconscious.

Some one ran to him, and then bellowed for a doctor.

Jack walked over to him and looked into Nick's face, now a pale yellow. Nick's eyes were open, and blood was coming from his mouth. A fear that he had killed Nick clutched suddenly at Jack's heart.

"Stand back, fellows, and give him air!" he shouted; and, kneeling by the treacherous boy, he tore open Nick's shirt, and began to chafe his hands and breast.

Dr. Miles Crane, Wilson's father, came elbowing through the crowd, and knelt at Nick's side.

He looked serious.

"Get a carriage!" he said, in a quiet tone.

Snodgrass' shining buggy was near at hand, and further away was Delancy Shelton's automobile.

"The auto will be quicker," said some one; and Nick was lifted, still unconscious, and borne to the auto.

Delancy was sitting in the auto, where he had witnessed the whole thing, and his pale face was now several shades paler than usual.

"Is—is he dead?" he asked of Dr. Crane, his voice trembling.

"Oh, no; just hurt!"

"Aw—seriously?"

"I don't know; my examination was too superficial; but you see he is unconscious. Take him straight to his home."

The doctor climbed into the auto and held Nick's head.

Some others piled in, and the auto sped away, through the wide double gates, and on into the town, toward Nick's home.

At the end of the cinder path a group of anxious young fellows, with a sprinkling of girls, had gathered

about Jack Lightfoot. Lafe was there, solicitously brushing the dust from Jack's running trunks, and asking him again and again if he was sure he was not hurt.

"Not hurt at all!" said Jack, with a bright look. "I fell like a log—couldn't catch myself, you know; but I'm not hurt."

"But are you *sure* you're not hurt?" Lafe demanded.

"Sure," said Jack. "Here, I'll prove it to you—give me an apple!"

That was proof enough for Lafe. If a fellow could eat he was all right, in Lafe's opinion.

Then suddenly Lafe rose up and bellowed with rage.

For the judges, in their wisdom, and after much consultation, had given the race to the boy from Cardiff.

CHAPTER IX.

HOW LAFE LAMPTON THREW THE HAMMER.

Wilson Crane and Tom Lightfoot had regained their "wind," and were now to compete with two fellows from Cardiff in a mile relay race, which would be two laps round the old fair grounds race track—that being a half-mile track.

Bent Murdock was one of the Cardiff runners, and Cleve Stormonth the other.

Murdock and Tom Lightfoot were to go the first half-mile; and, when they came round, the other two runners were to drop in, taking their places, and so finish the race.

Tom Lightfoot and Murdock went forward in front of the judges' stand in a perfect storm of applause.

Murdock bowed to the howling Cranford rooters as if he thought all their yelling was for himself alone, and his coolness and smiling grace gained many friends for him.

It is scarcely necessary to say that his friends from Cardiff were howling themselves hoarse, in an effort to beat the Cranford yelling.

Tom Lightfoot was a trim, fine-looking young fellow, a good runner and a good-looking boy.

The Cranford girls cheered him with hand-clappings, and the Cranford mascot, Rex, barked his loud-

"Why, you little rat, I'd throw it, of course!"

"Well, you'll never throw a hammer like that!"

"I bet I'll throw it like that as soon as you do, you mosquito!"

But others were crowding round, and Nat and Skeen had to adjourn their sparring match to another time.

"Yes, it's a good throw," said Lafe, as the people pressed to congratulate him, "but the records of amateurs, and even high-school fellows, show some better things than that."

"I don't believe it!" cried Skeen. "I don't believe it!"

There were other events after that—more hurdles, more races, in which Skeen and even Nat Kimball took part, together with the throwing of the discus, pole vaulting, and even a sack race, in which, with their feet in bags, some fellows from Cardiff tried to defeat an equal number from Cranford, who were hampered in the same manner.

There was much to cheer over, some things to laugh at, and a few to grow really enthusiastic about.

One of the latter was the four-hundred-and-forty-yards run, which Jack Lightfoot won against a Cardiff runner; thereby redeeming the defeat earlier in the day caused by that murderous interference on the part of Nick Flint.

The contests were by points; and the victory and the gate money went to Cranford.

CHAPTER X.

NICK FLINT'S CONFESSION.

Lily Livingston had her faults, but she was kind-hearted.

She was also a girl of unusual shrewdness. She had been looking at Delancy Shelton when he moved out behind the stands for that interview with Nick Flint, and she knew they had talked there together.

Later, when Nick ran into Jack in that way, the suspicion came to her like a flash that it was not an accident. She knew that Delancy disliked Jack, and she knew that Nick Flint was a good deal of a young scoundrel. She thought Delancy was a better specimen than Nick; but, perhaps, that was because she liked

Delancy and despised Nick, and also, perhaps, because Delancy was very wealthy and Nick poor. The glitter of money had a very dazzling effect on the eyes of Lily Livingston.

Yet, as said in the beginning, Lily Livingston had a kind heart.

She caught a glimpse of the yellowish, ghastly face of Nick Flint, as he was whirled away in Delancy's auto, and hastening to the buggy in which she had driven down to the grounds she asked the driver to follow the auto.

She arrived at Nick's home shortly after Nick had been taken into it, and while his mother was wailing over him and declaring that he was dead.

"I've come to help you all I can," said Lily, bustling in and addressing the distracted woman, while Delancy lounged outside, in his auto, smoking cigarettes and trembling.

The doctor and a neighbor woman who had run in were bending over Nick, who had been placed by the doctor on a lounge in the cheaply furnished sitting room.

Lily ran her eyes round that room, and on into the room next to it, surveying this latter room through the open door.

The house was poorly furnished; in fact, almost poverty was everywhere apparent. Nick's mother was cheaply dressed; and she had a faded, worn look. Nick had brought her a good deal of sorrow. Still, he was her son, and she loved him; and now she was thinking that he was about to die.

"I'll get some water," said Lily, seeing that Mrs. Flint was hardly able to give a coherent order.

She brought the water from the pump, in a basin she found; and handed it to the doctor, together with a clean towel; and the doctor began to shower the water over Nick's face, for Nick still lay in a stupor.

The doctor felt of Nick's pulse, placed an ear to Nick's chest, and listened for his breathing and the beating of his heart.

"Oh, I know he'll die; I know he'll die!" wailed his mother.

"I think not!" said the doctor, kindly. "But that was a nasty knockdown."

"You say Jack Lightfoot did it?"

"He crossed the track where Jack was racing, and they collided."

"Oh, it was Jack's fault, and I know it!"

She was crying and wringing her hands.

"I think he'll be all right in a little while," said the doctor.

He turned to Lily.

"Will you watch here just for a minute or two while I go with Mr. Shelton to my office for some medicines I need? We can go quickly."

Lily sat down by Nick's side and took the basin and the towel.

"Certainly," she answered; and began to bathe Nick's head, as she had seen the doctor do.

Nick started up, staring at her, while the doctor was gone. He did not know her at first, but as his mind cleared a little he recognized her, and he connected her presence there with Delancy and Reel.

"Reel hired me to do it," he said, wildly, though it was apparent he hardly knew what he was talking about.

Lily's eyes opened in a strange way; nevertheless, she admonished him to be quiet, and began to bathe his head again.

"But I know what I'm talking about! Jack's killed; and he caused me to do it; the bomb exploded and tore him to pieces, and—and—they're going to hang me for it."

"Oh, he's perfectly crazy!" cried Mrs. Flint.

"You must try to be quiet!" Lily urged, speaking to Nick.

"But Jack's dead, and——"

"Do you mean Jack Lightfoot? He's not dead."

"You ran into him accidentally," said his mother, "and that's what hurt you."

He stared at her, and tossed nervously and feverishly.

"It's a lie!" he shouted, in a tone that made Lily jump. "He's dead; he was blowed up by the dynamite in that—that—what was it? Oh, yes, that golf ball! In that golf ball! I know what I'm talking about, mother! It tore him to pieces, and I put it there, and they're going to hang me for it."

Mrs. Flint threw herself on him, hysterically, and begged him not to "go on" so, assuring him that he was imagining all this; but he still raved, and tossed himself on the lounge, starting up at times with a scream, under the impression that officers were coming to arrest him.

In thus throwing himself to and fro he knocked over the basin of water.

His mother picked it up from the floor and ran to get more water.

He looked slyly and strangely into Lily's face, as his mother went out, accompanied by the neighbor, and Lily saw that his mind was still temporarily unbalanced by the concussion the brain had received in that fall.

"It's so!" he whispered. "I did put the golf ball there, and it blew him up when he struck it with his golf club. I wouldn't tell anybody but you; but you're Delancy's girl, and Delancy and Reel are chums. You won't tell anybody about it? He hit it with his club, and it blew him up; but if they find it out they'll hang me. You won't tell anybody?"

He heard his mother returning, and clutched Lily wildly by the arm, almost tearing the sleeve of her white shirt-waist.

"Say that you won't tell anybody! He paid me for it; for putting the golf ball there, and for that—that out at the fair grounds, and——"

His mother's step was in the room.

"Say you won't tell!"

His fiery eyes seemed to eat into her, as he whispered this appeal.

"I won't tell!" she promised, her lips white.

He dropped back on the lounge, and, his mother coming up with the water, he began to rave again, as before.

But he was quieter when Dr. Crane arrived in the auto and came into the room.

The doctor saw that Nick was much better.

"You're a better doctor than I am," he said to Lily.

"Then I'll apply for an M. D. degree right away," she replied, brightly.

Her face was still pale, but she had good control of herself.

Nick turned his staring black eyes on the doctor.

"They ain't going to hang me?"

The doctor laughed cheerily.

"Not yet a while, my boy; they don't hang people for accidents! And Jack isn't dead!"

"I know he is dead," Nick insisted; "I saw him lying dead. It tore him to pieces."

The doctor smiled again. His thoughts were of that encounter between Nick and Jack on the race track; he knew nothing of the incident of the golf ball.

"Oh, you'll think differently in a little while! Here, take some of this!"

"He's been going on just dreadful!" cried Mrs. Flint.

The doctor put some medicine in a spoon and induced Nick to take it.

Then he leaned back in the chair and contemplated Nick's face.

"He'll be all right in a little while, Mrs. Flint!" he declared. "Don't worry unnecessarily about it. He had a heavy fall, that's all."

The doctor went away, as soon as he saw that Nick was better.

Lily remained with Mrs. Flint, and the neighbor woman, who seemed even more helpless than Nick's mother, remained.

Nick fell into a sleep, the result of the medicine.

When he awoke, some time later, Lily was still sitting there, the basin of water beside her.

Nick's mother and the neighbor had gone out into the kitchen, where they were trying to concoct something they thought would be of benefit to Nick.

Nick heard them in there, and turned his face to Lily.

He looked at her anxiously.

"Did I talk a—'a' while ago?"

She smiled upon him. Again she was her old self—bright, cheery, even jolly.

"Well, didn't you talk?"

"What did I say?"

"Oh, I don't remember what you said—just everything, I guess."

She did not wish to remember.

He looked at her, boring her with his black eyes.

"Did I say anything about Jack Lightfoot?"

"Well, that's about all you did say—you were raving about that accident down at the fair grounds."

"Anything else?"

He was anxious.

She laughed merrily, tossing her head.

"Well, now, you seemed to have a crazy idea that you had hit him so hard that he had been torn to pieces and killed, and you seemed afraid you'd be hanged for it. It was a funny idea, wasn't it?"

He still looked at her.

"Yes, it was—very funny. But, say"—he pierced her with his black eyes—"if I said anything more than that, you can keep still about it, I reckon? I think I said something about Delancy and Reel; but if I did, you'd better keep still about it, for them."

She laughed.

"I've got an awfully good forgettery! But you're out of your head, I think."

"I was out of my head, yes; and—and—I suppose I'm out of my head now. Yes, I guess I'm out of my head!"

He turned his face away and lay staring at the wall.

Delancy had returned in his auto, and, learning that he was outside, Lily now said "Good-by" to Nick, and went out and rode downtown with Delancy.

CHAPTER XI.

THE DIAMONDS.

The excitement that had attended the athletic contests was scarcely greater than that aroused when it became known over the town that, in striking at a golf ball which had been found out on the links, Jack's club had broken it open, and it was filled with diamonds.

The thing was so strange that people were not willing to believe it, until they went down to the jeweler's where the diamonds, and the broken golf ball with the bit of cotton still sticking in it, were displayed in the window.

After consulting with Nellie Conner and talking with some of his friends, Jack had decided to have the golf ball and the diamonds displayed in the window, and to insert in the *Cranford Item* and the *Cardiff*

Guardian notices of their "find," saying that if anyone claimed the ball, and could furnish satisfactory proof of ownership, the diamonds were at the owner's disposal.

But advertisements were really not needed to give this singular bit of news wings.

The *Item* spread it on its first page, with display heads of the "scare" order; and Mack Remington, as the correspondent of the *Guardian*, at Cardiff, had two columns about it in the *Guardian*, besides sending a report to his New York paper.

Among others who came down to the jeweler's window and stared in at those diamonds was Reel Snodgrass.

Nick Flint was another, as soon as he could leave his bed.

Nick stared until his face almost blackened.

"And I might have had them!" he groaned. "How in thunder did it happen, anyhow?"

But Reel Snodgrass knew, or fancied he knew.

He had received the fake golf ball from Boralmo, and he had long suspected that Boralmo was doing a bit of smuggling. He felt sure that in giving to him what he thought was a golf ball filled with dynamite, Boralmo, being intoxicated at the time, had given him one filled with smuggled diamonds. And he reasoned that the possession of fake golf balls used in smuggling, the same being hollow and prepared so that they could be opened, had suggested to Boralmo the idea of filling one with dynamite and thus making a bomb of it.

And he, too, groaned, like Nick Flint, and furiously cursed his own idiocy.

"Why didn't I look into the thing and see what it really held?" he demanded, fiercely, of himself.

But, though they wanted those diamonds, neither Nick nor Reel dared to admit that they had any knowledge of the hollow golf ball.

"Conscience doth make cowards of us all," says Shakespeare; and it was so in this case. Reel feared that if he claimed the ball an investigation would reveal altogether too much, and Nick feared the same thing; and so they kept still, while inwardly eaten up with greed and a desire for the diamonds.

"What's a hundred dollars—and that's all I got—to those diamonds?" said Nick to himself, over and over.

And, somehow, it made him hate Jack Lightfoot more than ever.

When no owner appeared to claim the diamonds, they were sold, bringing the snug sum of a little over two thousand dollars, and this was divided between Jack Lightfoot and Nellie Conner.

"Mother," said Jack, gayly, "I think I'd better hunt old golf balls from this on; there's money in it."

The reason for his gayety to those who have followed these stories needs hardly to be pointed out.

Lately Mrs. Lightfoot had been in straitened financial circumstances.

She would be so no longer, for a time at least.

While the talk of the strangely found diamonds was at its height Lily Livingston chanced to find herself alone with Reel Snodgrass one day.

"Reel," she said, "do you know anything about those diamonds and that funny golf ball?"

His face grew white.

"No," he said. Then added, slowly: "What makes you ask—what makes you suggest such a thing?"

"Well, I was up at Nick Flint's, after he was taken home that day of the meet, and while he was half out of his mind he said some awfully funny things, that made me think, since this has come out, that——"

"That what?"

"Well, you don't know anything about that golf ball?"

He turned on her, his face now as white as chalk.

"I really don't know what you're talking about!" he declared, almost savagely.

"Oh, well, then"—and she smiled—"we'll let it drop!"

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 30, will be another ripping baseball story—"Jack Lightfoot in the Box; or, The Mascot that Hoodooed the Nine." The game is played at Tidewater, that lively town on the coast, and the Tidewater Tigers, one of the very best nines in the league, are the players opposed to the Cranford boys. It is a rattling good story, which you are sure to enjoy.

A CHAT WITH YOU

Under this general head we purpose each week to sit around the camp fire, and have a heart-to-heart talk with those of our young readers who care to gather there, answering such letters as may reach us asking for information with regard to various healthy sports, both indoor and out. We should also be glad to hear what you think of the leading characters in your favorite publication. It is the editor's desire to make this department one that will be eagerly read from week to week by every admirer of the Jack Lightfoot stories, and prove to be of valuable assistance in building up manly, healthy Sons of America. All letters received will be answered immediately, but may not appear in print under five weeks, owing to the fact that the publication must go to press far in advance of the date of issue. Those who favor us with correspondence will please bear this in mind, and exercise a little patience.

THE EDITOR.

Why don't you introduce some sort of a baseball tournament in ALL-SPORTS? Others do, and I think it must be pretty popular among the boys, from what I hear. I belong to a club, and we have some hot games through the season. We've done so fine this year that all of us are sorry now we didn't enter one of those tournaments in the early part of the summer. Then we might have carried off the prize and got a full layout of suits and other things, as well as the pennant. I have read every number so far, and I'm more pleased than a little over the way the stories are written.

WM. D. THOMS.

Indianapolis, Ind.

It is now manifestly much too late in the baseball season for us to contemplate such a plan as our young friend has suggested. Perhaps next year we may take it up in time and do something on that order. But we doubt very much whether the boys really take enough interest in the matter to warrant the publishers going to such expense and trouble. However, that may be all left to the future to decide.

Will you please tell me what the average of a boy of sixteen is, and what would make him pick up a little? My measurements are as follows: Height, 5 feet 6 inches; weight, 104 pounds; chest, 29 inches; expanded, 31½ inches; thigh, 18 inches; calf, 12 inches. I have been reading ALL-SPORTS for quite a while, and found Jack Lightfoot all to the good. There is an old saying that good stuff comes in small quantities, but why not have a little more of the good stuff? Hoping your stories will be a little longer in the future,

H. G. HOYT.

Newark, N. J.

You certainly lack considerable all around for a young fellow of your size and age; but the chances are you have just been passing through the time of life when everything gives way to quick growth with regard to height. No doubt you will begin to fill out after a while. Take plenty of healthy exercise, avoid stimulants, such as liquor and tobacco, even coffee being productive of more harm than good, and eat such food as is calculated to build up a vigorous body. Pastry and such things are especially injurious. You are from ten to fifteen pounds below the average in weight. Your chest measurement should be about thirty-five inches, and there is also a lack of inches with regard to other particulars. Try expanding the chest in one of the several methods given from time to time in these columns. Thank you for your good opinion.

I have read every number of ALL-SPORTS up to 17. The stories are very good. "Jack Lightfoot in the Saddle" was exceedingly good. In fact, I think it is the best Mr. Stevens has yet written. The ball games that Mr. Stevens gives us are very fine. I hope that he will also favor us with football stories as good this coming fall. Jack Lightfoot is a good character.

I hope he will go to some college. Well, I think I have said about enough, and, wishing you success,

Sacramento, Cal.

AN ALL-SPORTS ADMIRER.

In due season there will come the class of stories you yearn to read, and we rather imagine that when the Cranford boys get upon the gridiron there will be something doing in the old town.

I have written my praise of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY once before this, but I could not help but write again to let the readers of this grand weekly know how much better I like the stories now than I did then. I just like them better each week. The more I read of the characters the more I like them. I can't hardly express the pleasure they are to me. I want you to give Mr. Stevens my heartfelt thanks for giving us such a fine weekly for such a low price as five cents. Jack Lightfoot is an ideal boy, and we all love him for his nice ways and his generalship with the nine. Tom is like a brother to Jack. I think Phil Kirtland is getting along fine, and will some day be a chum to Jack instead of an enemy or rival. Lafe Lampton is the "stuff"; that is, when he has an apple. When will you begin any more weeklies? Hope they will be as good as ALL-SPORTS when you do begin them. Long life to Jack and all the "boys,"

Mr. Stevens and the publishers,

J. S. BYRUM.

Sherman Heights, Tenn.

Always pleased to receive such an enthusiastic letter. We have reason to believe the stories are taking fast hold upon our boys from Maine to California, and that the future of ALL-SPORTS is assured. At the same time, those who are our best friends can do us the greatest good possible by acting as missionaries and spreading the gospel of athletic training which we preach. Tell all your boy friends how much you think of the stories, so that they may share in your pleasure, and the sales be increased. We have high aims, and hope to see the ALL-SPORTS' banner far ahead of all competitors.

I take pleasure in writing you my view of the ALL-SPORTS. I think it is the best weekly published. After I finish an ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, it seems I cannot wait until the next issue is published.

My main question is on the subject of pitching. A friend of mine and myself have formed a battery, and have practiced daily for the past five weeks. I have good control of the outcurve and in-shoot. Whenever I try to pitch the drop, it puts a slight strain on my elbow. Will you please advise me whether I should keep on practicing the drop, and tell me what to do to keep my arm in shape?

The baseball stories you have published are simply fine. I have read many books on baseball, but I think that out of all I have read, the ALL-SPORTS beats them easily.

I have read a letter sent you by one of your readers, stating that there was not enough said about the girls. I think he is right. The stories would not be complete if the girls were not mentioned.

Wishing you success with the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, I will now close my letter, with three cheers for Mr. Stevens, Jack Lightfoot, the baseball team, and "Rex," the mascot. Hoping you will put this in "A Chat With You," I will be greatly obliged. A constant reader,

HENRY VALENTINE.

New York City.

Practice that drop ball with extreme care. You may succeed in mastering it, but be careful of your arm. It may be a bit weak in one particular place, the result of some previous injury. If it continues to hurt, let the drop go, for the present. Better go through life without a drop than to ruin your arm forever. Massage treatment you will find good for the arm. Most pitchers

have their "wing" well rubbed and treated from time to time; but it is the regular practice that keeps them in condition. Let a pitcher be idle a week and he grows very rusty.

Jack Lightfoot! Oh, he is a trump;
He gives his enemies many a bump.
He is an all-around athlete—
To read of him is, indeed, a treat.

Lafe Lampton, he is a fine boy;
To eat a good apple is his most joy.
A friend to Jack, I should say he is!
And on the diamond he knows his biz!

Tom Lightfoot, a cousin to Jack is he.
I'd like very much if a high-school boy he'd be.
But never mind, he knows the baseball game,
And some day on the diamond he will gain fame.

Nellie Conner, Jack's sweetheart, so I think;
She is a fine girl—don't you wink!
Kate Strawn—a beautiful girl—
Brodie's sister is she, and a dainty pearl.

Phil Kirtland—well, he is all right;
He is always ready for his rights to fight.
With Jack he is not so thick, as yet;
But he will come over in a little while, you bet.

Brodie Strawn—a slugger on the team;
He does not like Jack, so it does seem.
But he will come over one of these days,
For that is one of Brodie's queer ways.

And the others, they're a jolly bunch;
They like to watch Lafe his apples munch.
The whole team knows everything of baseball,
And it's a good team that takes out of them a fall.

I hope all the boys will read your book
If only at the picture and "Chat" to look;
For it teaches you how to be healthy and strong.
And now I am done, I've finished my song.

Argenta, Ark.

AN ARDENT ADMIRER.

Perhaps the boys may not vote you a born poet, or a "sweet singer from Arkansaw," but we have reason to believe one and all must join in the loyal sentiments you attempt so valiantly to express.

I have read every number of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, and think they are fine. Jack Lightfoot is even a finer character than the famous Frank and Dick Merriwell. "Loaf" is a dandy, and so is Tom Lightfoot. Of the girls, I like Nellie Conner best. Following are my measurements: Age, 15 years 2 months; height, 5 feet 4¾ inches; weight, 115 pounds; neck, 13½ inches; shoulders, 35 inches; chest, normal, 31 inches; expanded, 32½ inches; wrist, 6 inches; forearm, 9½ inches; elbow, 12 inches; biceps, 9 inches; waist, 26 inches; hips, 31 inches; thigh, 17¼ inches; knee, 13½ inches; calf, 12 inches; ankle, 9½ inches. What are my weak points, and what exercises do you advise for them? How are my measurements as a whole? What sports do you think I am best fitted for? Hoping to see this in print soon, I close, with best wishes to ALL-SPORTS, the "Prince of Weeklies."

THE UNKNOWN.

Honey Grove, Tex.

Your weight is just right, but you lack several inches about the chest, which should be something like thirty-four inches, normal. Try to increase your lung capacity. You also seem to be short around the hips and calf, so that, in some other way, you must make up for this, since your weight is normal. As to what sports you are best fitted for, you are better able to judge. Follow what you like best, since in that line you are more apt to excel. At the same time avoid doing too much, since an excess may be worse than a deficiency. We rather think you are in pretty good shape, Mr. Unknown, and it is pleasant to know that you enjoy ALL-SPORTS so well. Here's success to you.

I have just finished reading one of the latest books of ALL-SPORTS, and I think that is a very pleasing one to read. I have also just got through looking over the Chat columns. As for my part, I never read any better stories than those written by Mr. Stevens. He writes some of the best stories ever published.

If this would not bother you, I wish you would please tell me if I am any good for an athlete. My height is 5 feet 5 inches; age, 14 years; chest, 32½ inches; waist, 26 inches; hips, 33½ inches; thighs, 18 inches; calf, 14 inches. I am a steady reader of ALL-SPORTS. Hoping to hear from you soon, sincerely yours,

RAY CONNOR.

701 Lode Street, Cripple Creek, Colo.

You lack a couple of inches in chest measurement, Ray. In previous issues you will find several methods given whereby you may add to your girth there, and to your advantage. Your other measurements are very fair. You fail to give your weight, which should be about one hundred and fifteen pounds. There is hope that by judicious exercise you will, in good time, become an athlete.

Please answer the following questions in ALL-SPORTS. I am 17 years old; 5 feet 5 inches tall; weight, 128 pounds. Measure across shoulders, 14½ inches; chest, normal, 33½ inches; expanded, 35½ inches; waist, 29 inches; around hips, 35 inches; biceps, normal, 9½ inches; expanded, 11 inches; thigh, 19½ inches; calf, 12½ inches; ankle, 8½ inches. How are my measurements? What line of athletics am I built for? Is twelve seconds good time for me for one hundred yards? I have read every number of ALL-SPORTS, and think they are fine.

Canarsie, N. Y.

C. O. LEWIS.

You are some thirteen pounds above the average for your height. Your chest is good. You are large about the waist, more than two inches, in fact, which would account for your heavy weight. You undoubtedly enjoy the good things of life as well as most boys. But, again, you are lacking in the calf, which should measure about fourteen inches. It would be hard to tell what especial line of athletics you are best suited for, lacking further information. You are the best judge, knowing what your strong points may be.

I have been reading all about Jack Lightfoot and the others ever since the stories started, and I must say they are a fine lot. Some of the other fellows round town and myself have decided to do some gymnasium work on our own account, because there is no gymnasium we can use. We have a few pieces of apparatus, and a friend of mine let us fit up part of his barn to work in. We are saving up to buy weights and stuff, and by next fall we will have quite a fine place. I would like to have you tell me, if you can spare the time, just how I ought to train. First, I'll tell you how I measure up now, and you can tell me how I compare with the average. Everybody round here says I am good. Do you think so? I weigh 115 pounds and stand 5 feet 2 inches. Chest measure, 33 inches; waist, 30 inches; hips, 36 inches; thighs, 20 inches; calf, 14 inches. Most of all the fellows are about my height, and if you could criticise me, it would help us all. Now, for my part, I wish Mr. Stevens would have more to say about the girls of Cranford. To my mind, they are forgotten too often. Please do not answer by letter, but I would like to see this in print. Yours, wishing success to ALL-SPORTS and to the Winner Company,

MICHAEL A. STACHOWICZ.

West Hammond, Ill.

For your height, the average weight of an athlete would be something like one hundred and two pounds, so that you can see you are quite considerable to the good. The chances are your athletic training will take off some of the extra when you are in the harness. Your chest is fine, also the measurements for thigh and calf. You will find the various apparatus in a gymnasium useful up to a certain degree, but we should imagine that, at this time of year, out-of-door work, baseball, long tramps, rowing and the like would give you greater satisfaction, leaving the indoor business to that time when the snow and cold prevent your doing these other things.

HOW TO DO THINGS

By AN OLD ATHLETE.

Timely essays and hints upon various athletic sports and pastimes, in which our boys are usually deeply interested, and told in a way that may be easily understood. Just at present baseball is the topic in hand, and instructive articles may be found in back numbers of the ALL-SPORTS LIBRARY, as follows: No. 14, "How to Become a Batter." No. 15, "The Science of Place Hitting and Bunting." No. 16, "How to Cover First Base." No. 17, "Playing Shortstop." No. 18, "Pitching." No. 19, "Pitching Curves." No. 20, "The Pitcher's Team Work." No. 21, "Playing Second Base." No. 22, "Covering Third Base." No. 23, "Playing the Outfield." No. 24, "How to Catch." (I.) No. 25, "How to Catch." (II.) No. 26, "How to Run Bases." No. 27, "Coaching and the Coach." No. 28, "How to Umpire."

HOW TO MANAGE PLAYERS.

The various talks on baseball we have had in this department have been intended for boys who have formed among themselves a nine to play the game. Such an organization needs a great deal of instruction, and to provide that has been the purpose of these papers. We now come to a talk that must be somewhat vague and general in terms, a talk on how to manage players. Upon no other rock have so many promising boys' clubs split as upon that of mismanagement, and yet management of a team is the one subject upon which no writer can give practical advice. The difference between managing twelve or fifteen boys who want to play ball differs from the management of an army only in degree; the principle of the thing is the same. A man has to be born to manage an army; he cannot be taught how to do it; he must have it in him. So, for the same reason, a boy must be a born manager to handle a nine. It implies the knack of dealing with human nature, of making people do what you want them to without their knowing they are being made to do anything; of knowing what to make them do, and what to let them do themselves. If any of you boys who read these sentences ever happen to remember that definition later in life, you will wonder if you really understood it when you read it.

In a small team, the best man to manage is the captain. Usually he is the boy who had the enterprise and persistence to get the fellows together to play ball in the first place, and, as a general thing, he is a clever player himself, has some understanding of the game, and can pick a good man for a position. To watch his companions, perfect team play, remove unsuitable men from positions and select others for them, keep an eye on the physical condition of the players and see that practice is frequent, regular and aimed to correct weaknesses—these are a portion of the manager's duties. In addition, he arranges for games, attends to all correspondence, has charge of the money, looks out for transportation and generally takes care of the club's business. It is plain to be seen that, in a large club, the positions of captain and manager could not be held by one man; but in a small team, the captain can readily take charge of the little business that the team has, and at the same time assume the field duties that usually fall to the manager.

The manager's most important work is to get the most playing out of his team; to get all out of each player he has in him; to keep every player enthusiastic and determined to do his best in every game. There is but one

way to do this. Make it as pleasant for each player as possible. A bit of advice here, a bit of criticism there, praise when it is deserved—these are the three tricks to keep a man working. Get him interested in his own playing and in the team's success, make him realize the value of team work as well as of individual excellence, and try to make him believe the team can overcome any opponent that comes up against it. The necessary thing in a game is to have the team hang together. Self-confidence in each individual player and in the players as a body is essential to success. If a team firmly believes it can win, the boys will play like Indians.

Never call a player down on the field. There is no surer method to wreck a team than for the manager to scold his players while they are in the presence of opponents. In fact, criticism of individual work, even before the other members of a man's own team, should be resorted to but seldom. A few words in private will prove just as effective, and will not injure the player's self-esteem, as a reproof before others will. But never criticize a man before the opponents—unless, of course, you want to have your team sour on you and lose the season.

Never knock. A boy may be stupid, slow, dull, but never knock him. No matter how good-natured a fellow may be, there will come the day when he must resent constant jesting at his expense, and the manager will find one member of the club on his hands who is dissatisfied. To have one dissatisfied member is like putting a rotten apple on a shelf with good ones—they'll all be rotten in short order. So, if one player sours on the manager, the others will first grow lukewarm and then turn against him, too.

In picking your team, select your players carefully, and then be slow to change. Never make more than one change at a time. The pitchers are the worst trials of the manager; like an operatic tenor, you must have them, and they are the hardest to manage. The men on the infield must work together, and a perfectly running team cannot be created in a jiffy. It takes time and hard work to build up an effective infield, and the men should be given plenty of time to develop. Outfielders and first basemen should be first-class batters, since the work on those positions in the defensive game is much less important than that of any other position. Every player should fully understand that he must come up to the club's standard as a player, but at the same time, he should feel a certain amount of confidence in the good will of the manager. Every player has his off days, and he should not feel that a slip on such a day means his dismissal from the team. At the same time, discipline should be always maintained. The team is a team, out for scores, and every player must realize his importance and the necessity he is under with regard to responsibility for its success.

Practice makes perfect, and the manager should see that the players get all the practicing they can stand. The one way to develop team work is by practice, and the success of the modern game lies in team work. Practice alone strengthens men where they are weak. Some hard hitters are poor bunters or place hitters; here is the manager's task. Make such men practice until they are able to do the work they should. Develop the players as much as possible in practice; get them accustomed to, and able to understand, one another. If you succeed, your team will be like a clock, needing only an occasional fillip to keep on running perfectly.

THE RED RAVEN LIBRARY

THRILLING SEA STORIES

This library represents an entirely new idea. It is totally different from any other now published. The stories detail the adventures of three plucky lads who set out to capture the notorious Captain Kidd. Every real boy has longed to read more about the doings of this bold marauder of the seas and the opportunity is now given them.

The stories are of generous length and without equals in thrilling adventure and interest. The best sea stories ever written.

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- 12—Capt. Kidd's Stratagem; or, Simple Simon Takes Soundings.
- 13—The *Red Raven's* Prize; or, How Young Thad Sailed a Pirate Barque.
- 14—Nailed to the Mast; or, The Last of Capt. Kidd's "Hole in the Wall."
- 15—Capt. Kidd's Long Chase; or, Thad and His Chums in the Tropics.
- 16—Set Adrift by Pirates; or, Thad's Adventures in the Saragossa Sea.
- 17—To Sink or Swim; or, Thad and His Friends On Blue Water.
- 18—Capt. Kidd's Drag-Net; or, How Young Thad Hoodwinked the Buccaneers.
- 19—The Phantom Pirate; or, Thad and His Chums on the Haunted Ship.
- 20—The Winged Witch; or, How Three Boys Saved the Treasure Galleon.
- 21—Capt. Kidd in New Orleans; or, The Pirate Scourge of the Rigolets.
- 22—Tiger of the Sea; or, The Three Castaways of the Gulf.
- 23—The Pirates of The Keys; or, Our Boys Afloat on the Spanish Main.
- 24—Capt. Kidd at Bay; or, Marooned On a Sand-Spit.
- 25—The Silver Barque; or, Capt. Kidd's Last Prize.
- 26—Among the Buccaneers; or, Thad and His Chums in Desperate Straits.
- 27—The Red Scourge; or, How Morgan, the Buccaneer, Stormed the Citadel.
- 28—The Chase of the Slaver; or, Thad Among the Indigo Planters.
- 29—Morgan's Coast Raiders; or, Thad at the Sacking of Maracaibo.
- 30—The Buccaneer's Ghost; or Thad's Adventures with the Pearl Divers.
- 31—The Sea Cat; or, How Our Boys Held the Fort.
- 32—The Phantom Galleon; or, Thad's Adventures Along the Isthmus.
- 33—A Blue Water Free-Lance; or, Thad Adrift in a Leaking Pinnacle.
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